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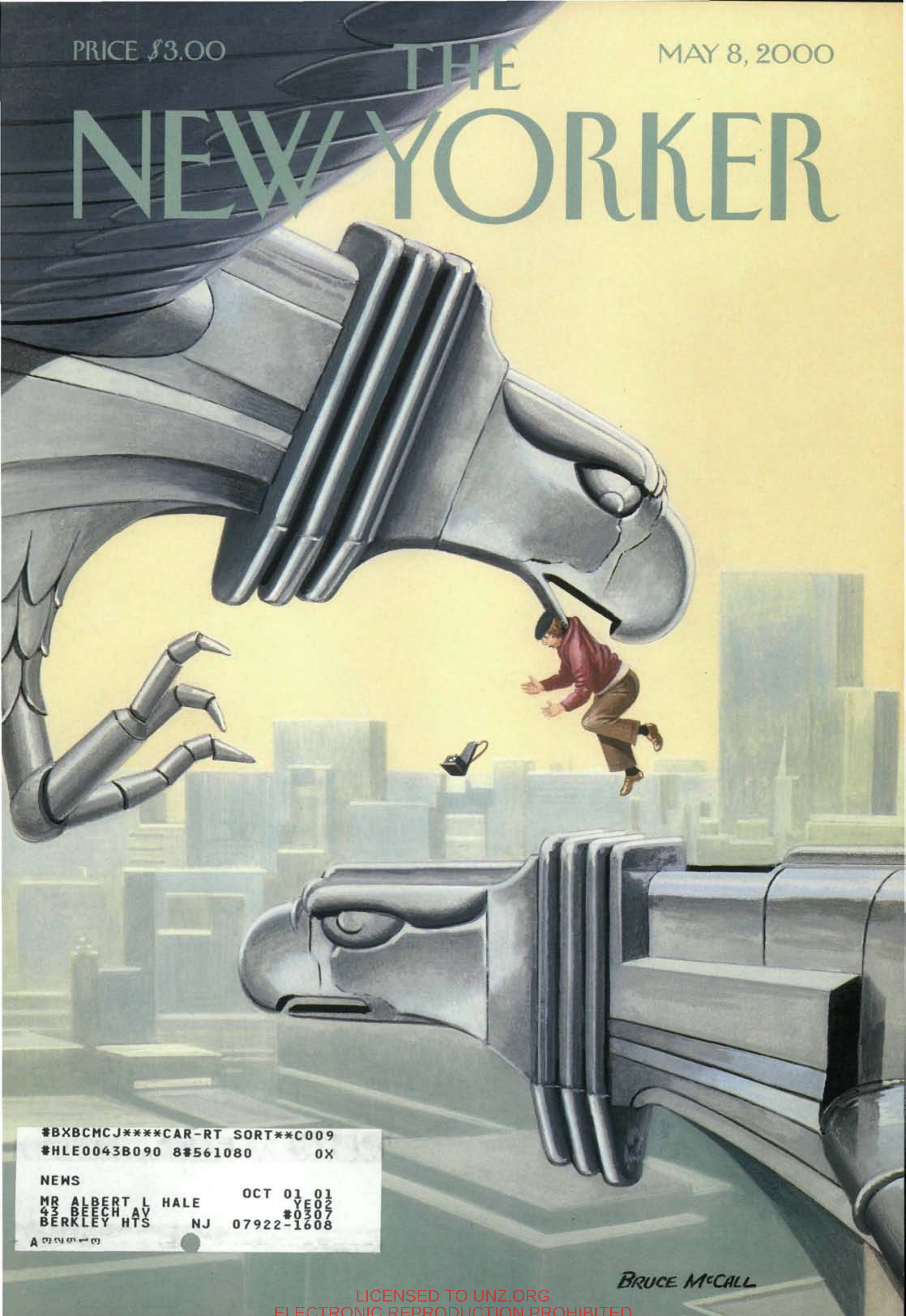
THE NEW YORKER

MAY 8, 2000



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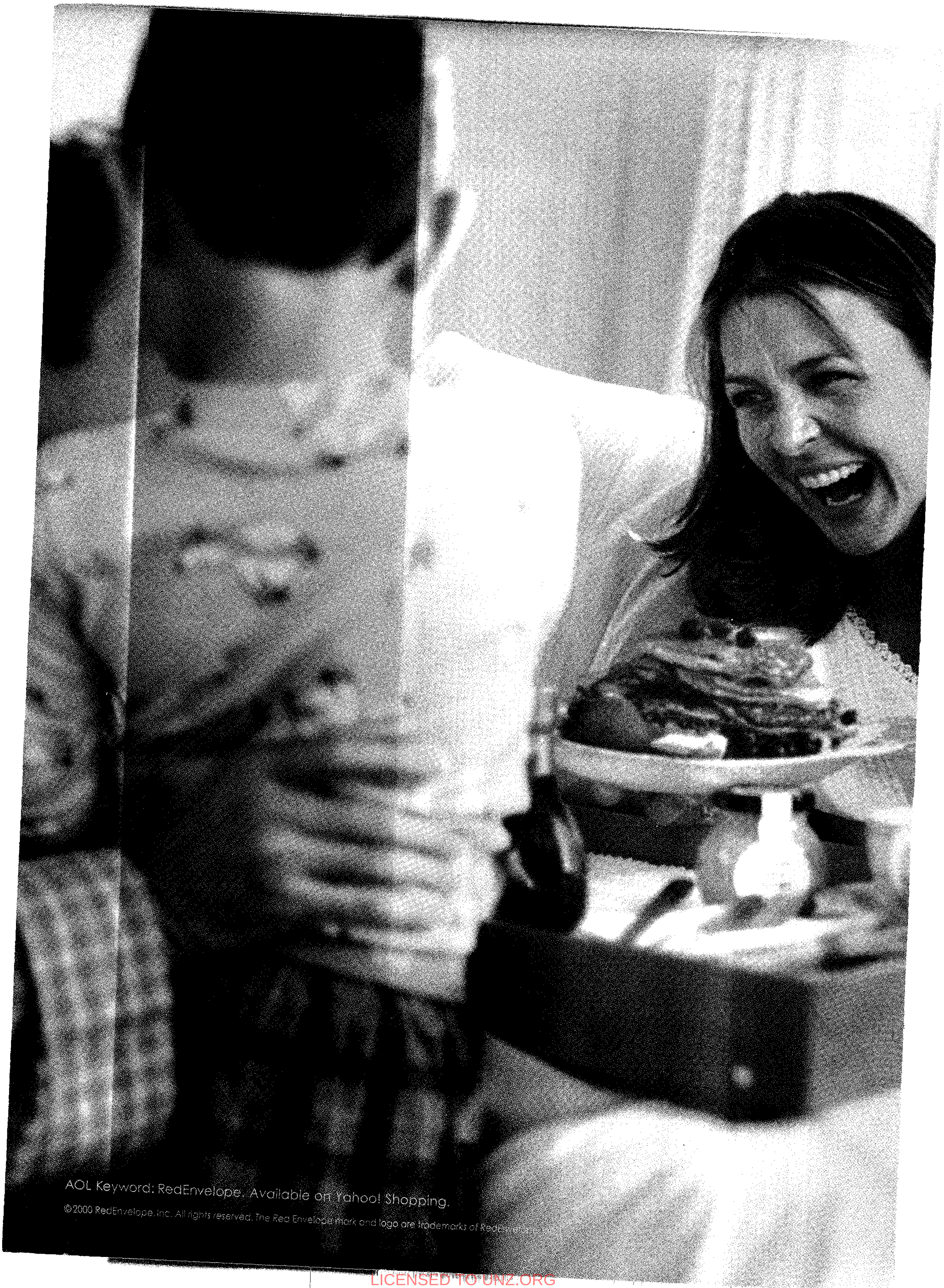

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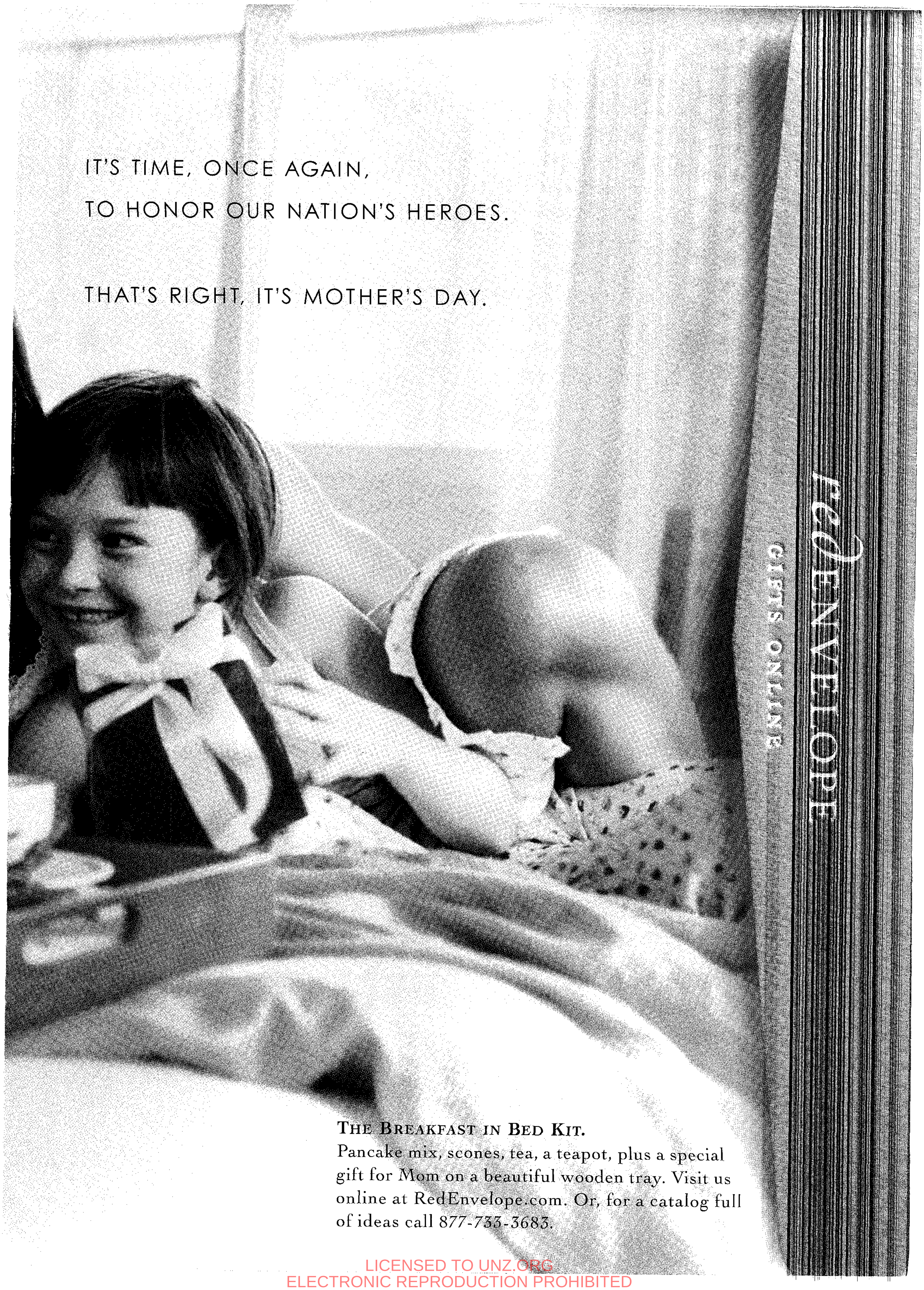
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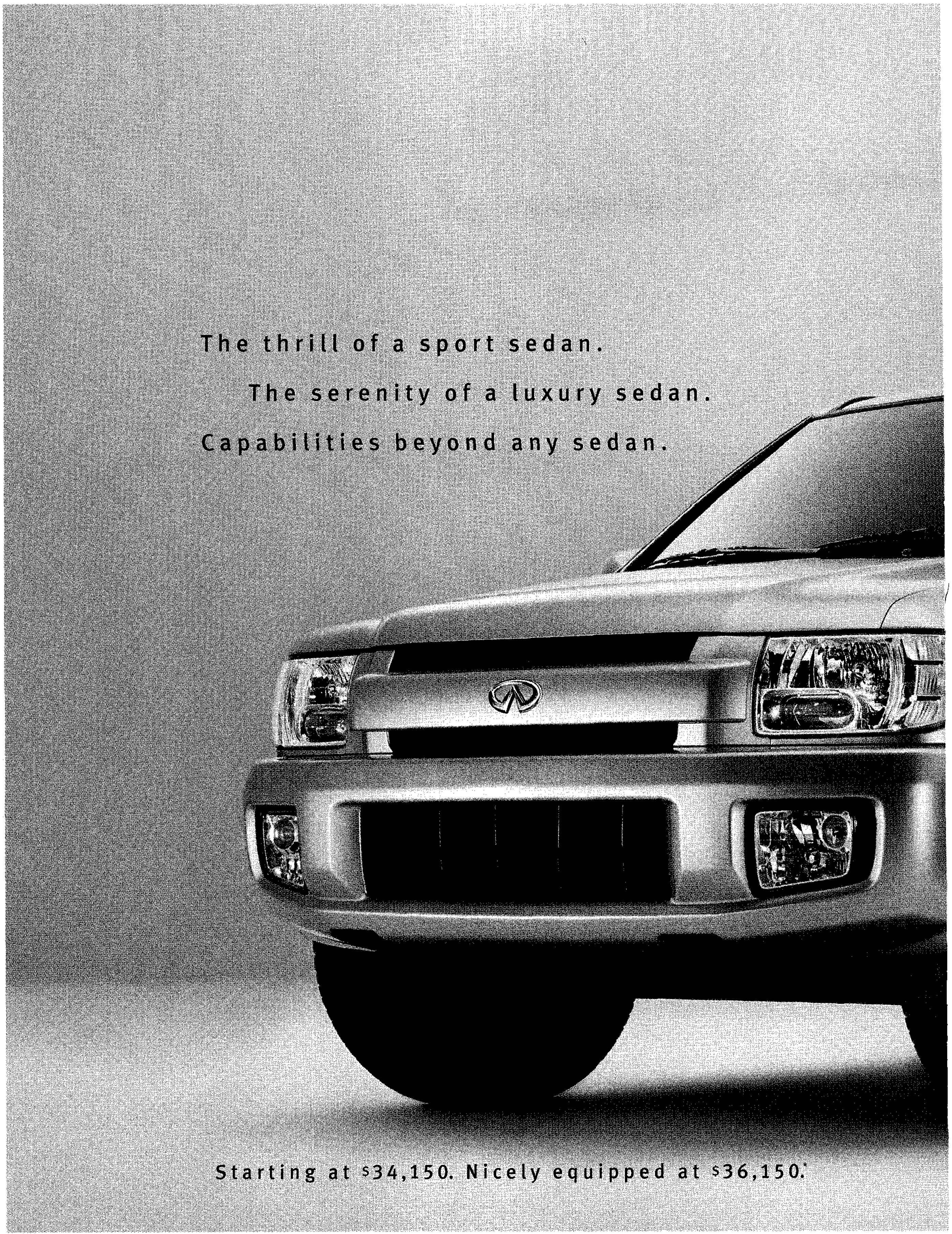
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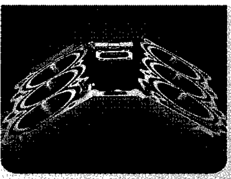

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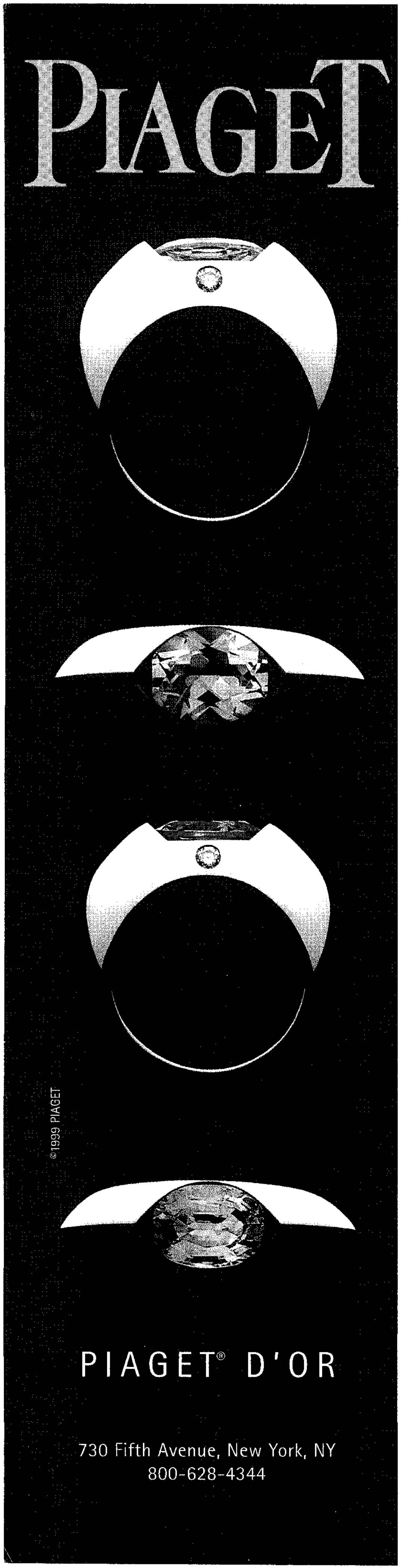
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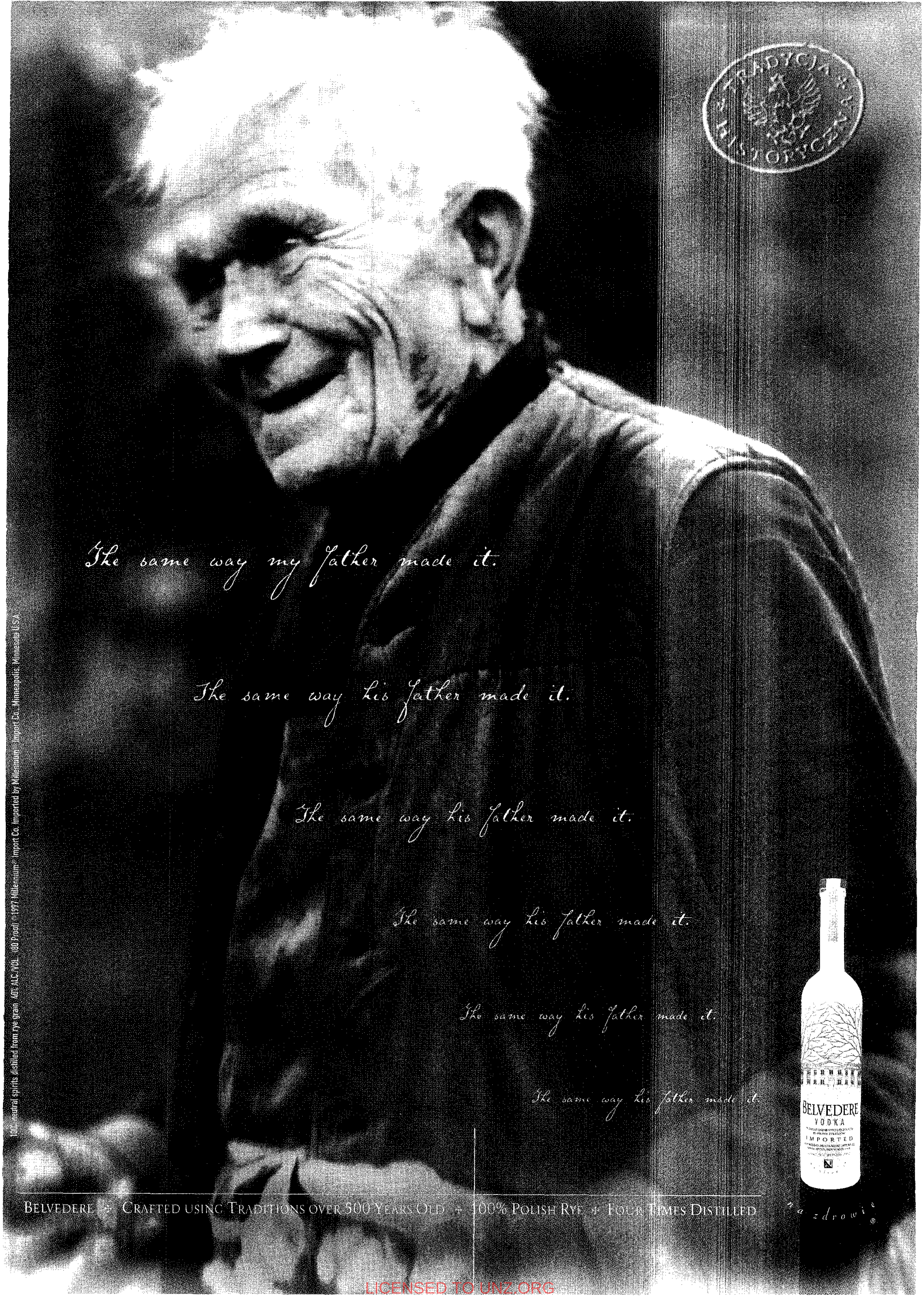
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Alma Guillermoprieto ("My Servant Problem," p. 70) lives in Mexico and writes about Latin America for the magazine.

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Bruce McCall (Cover) has contributed to *The New Yorker* since 1979. He is currently working on a book about dream cars.

Elizabeth Kolbert ("Personal and Political," p. 60) is a staff writer at *The New Yorker.*

Matthew Klam (Fiction, p. 100) will publish his first collection, "Sam the Cat and Other Stories," later this month. He lives in Washington, D.C.

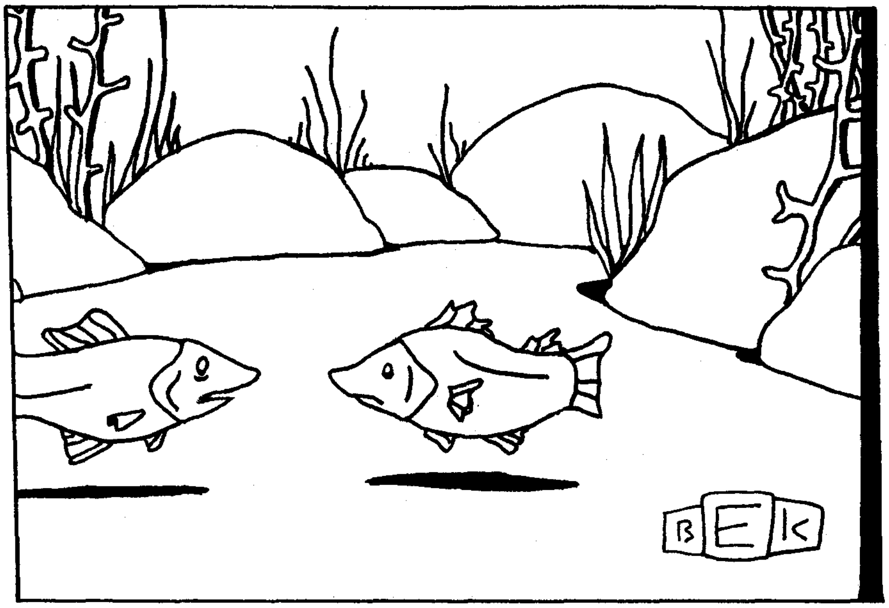
Edward Gorey (The Back Page), who died last month, wrote and illustrated more than a hundred books.

John Koethe (Poem, p. 72) is a professor of philosophy at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. He has published five collections of poetry and a book on Wittgenstein.

Alex Ross (Musical Events, p. 127) writes about music for the magazine.

Nancy Franklin (The Talk of the Town, p. 54), who has been on the staff of *The New Yorker* since 1978, is a theatre and television critic for the magazine.

Alexander Stille ("Resurrecting Alexandria," p. 90) is working on a book about the cultural consequences of technological change. ♦



"To tell you the truth, even when I'm in water I don't feel that comfortable."

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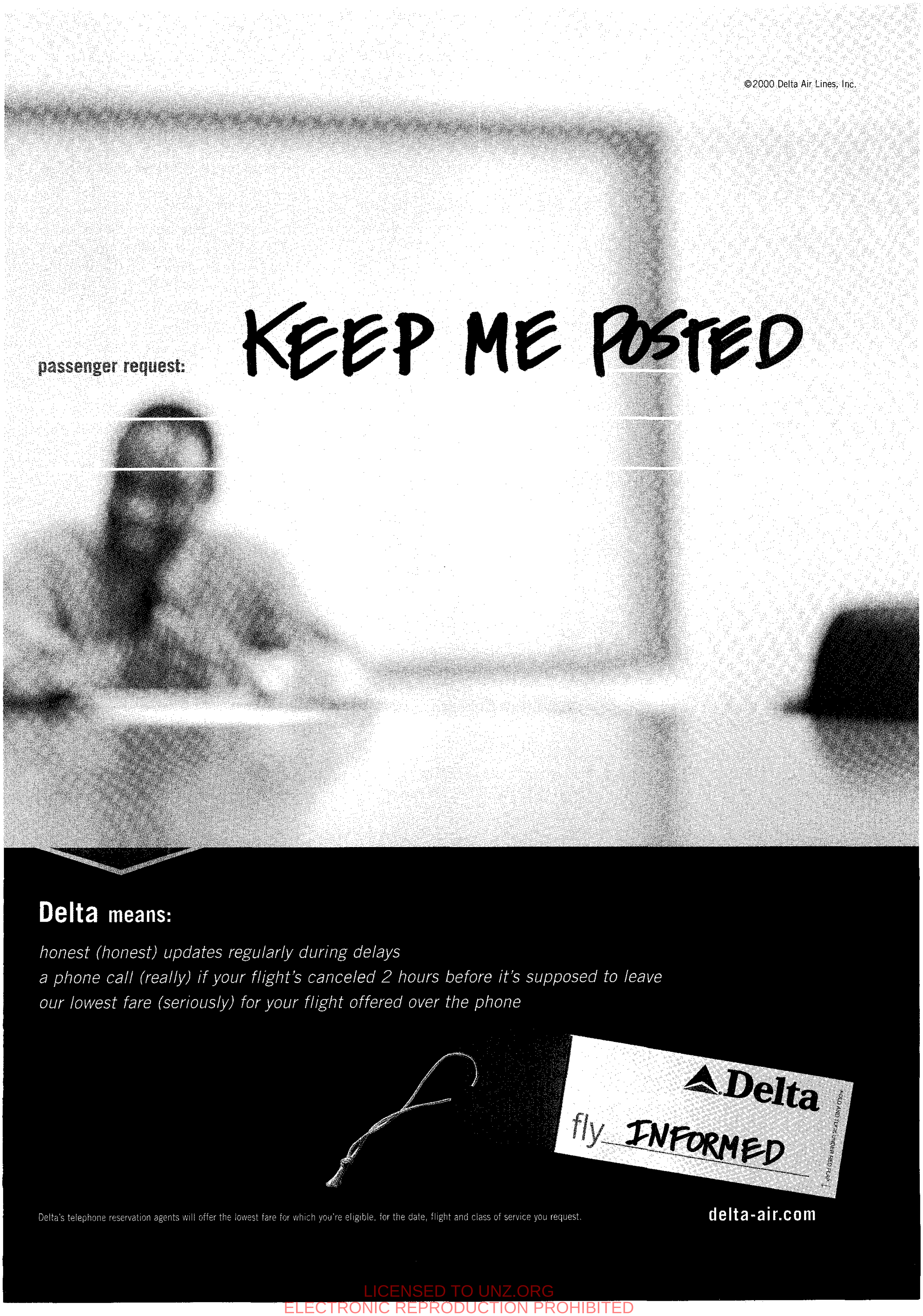

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THE MAIL

SUBURBAN PLANNING

We have little reason to complain after reading Paul Goldberger's review of our new book, "Suburban Nation: The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream" (Books, March 27th), but we can't resist clarifying what we believe to be a fundamental misunderstanding. Perhaps not by coincidence, it concerns Goldberger's major criticism: that we need to "loosen up about the world a little more." He contrasts our use of physically descriptive design codes with Jane Jacobs's unkempt city of free-market happenstance, and suggests that we prefer control to serendipity.

This presumes that an absence of design codes would naturally result in a wonderful messy vitality. But, sadly, in today's quasi-monopolistic world of mass-market culture the result is monoculture: left alone, developers and merchants repeat easy successes and places become uniform. This is why so much of America is beginning to look the same, every place feels like no place in particular, and travel is becoming less and less rewarding. It has been nearly forty years since Jacobs's era, and the rules have changed. In today's suburbs and cities alike, design codes are necessary to generate the variety that we, too, hold dear.

Andres Duany
Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk
Jeff Speck
Miami, Fla.

THE INMATES' TURN

Ted Conover, in "Guarding Sing Sing" (April 3rd), writes about the taking away of inmates' educational opportunities and gives several examples of prisoners unsuccessfully attempting to air grievances. Then he wonders why prisoners resort to barbaric, primitive means to gain attention, such as throwing feces. The article shows that two basic human rights—to learn and redeem oneself and to be heard—have been surgically removed from the penal system in the United States, and so have almost all rewards for good behavior. Studies consistently show that a lack of educational and rehabilitative opportunities in prison dramatically increase recidivism. In the view of the prison industry and the correctional officers' unions, this is a positive trend. The more prisoners who keep coming back, the more prisons to be built, the more money to be made.

Jerry Gillies
Pleasant Valley State Prison
Coalinga, Calif.

AFTER WASHINGTON

In "After Seattle" (April 17th), William Finnegan presents a curiously slanted view of the World Bank. Over the thirty years I worked with the United States Agency for International Development, I studied the bank's programs closely. Finnegan doesn't mention that the bank provides no-interest loans to the poorest nations for development projects (such as a rural potable-water program and farming-community improvements in Vietnam's Mekong Delta), or that a unit of the bank lends to the private sector, for instance to support private-hospital construction in the Dominican Republic, where the lack of hospitals is one of the major barriers to tourism development. He dismisses a pipeline project in Africa, which would increase foreign-exchange earnings for a nation critically in need of imports to further its development, and overlooks small-farm agriculture, urban sanitation (sewers are not glamorous, but they are vital for human health and environmental protection), power generation, and electrification—all part of helping countries get on a sustainable, independent path to growth.

Robert Hechtman
McLean, Va.

•

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "The Mail," The New Yorker, 4 Times Square, New York, N.Y. 10036. They can also be faxed to 212-286-5047 or sent via E-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium; we regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter.

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Betsy Lerner

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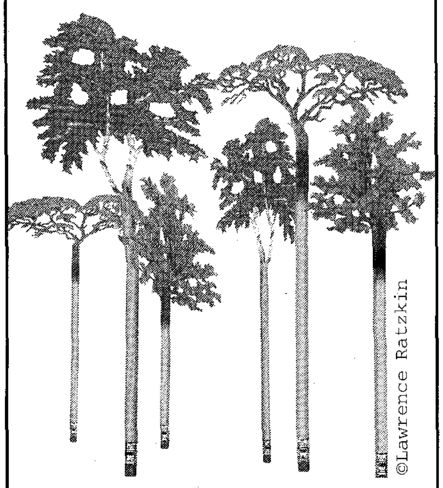

A veteran editor turned agent shares her wisdom and imparts an insider's understanding from both sides of the publishing process.

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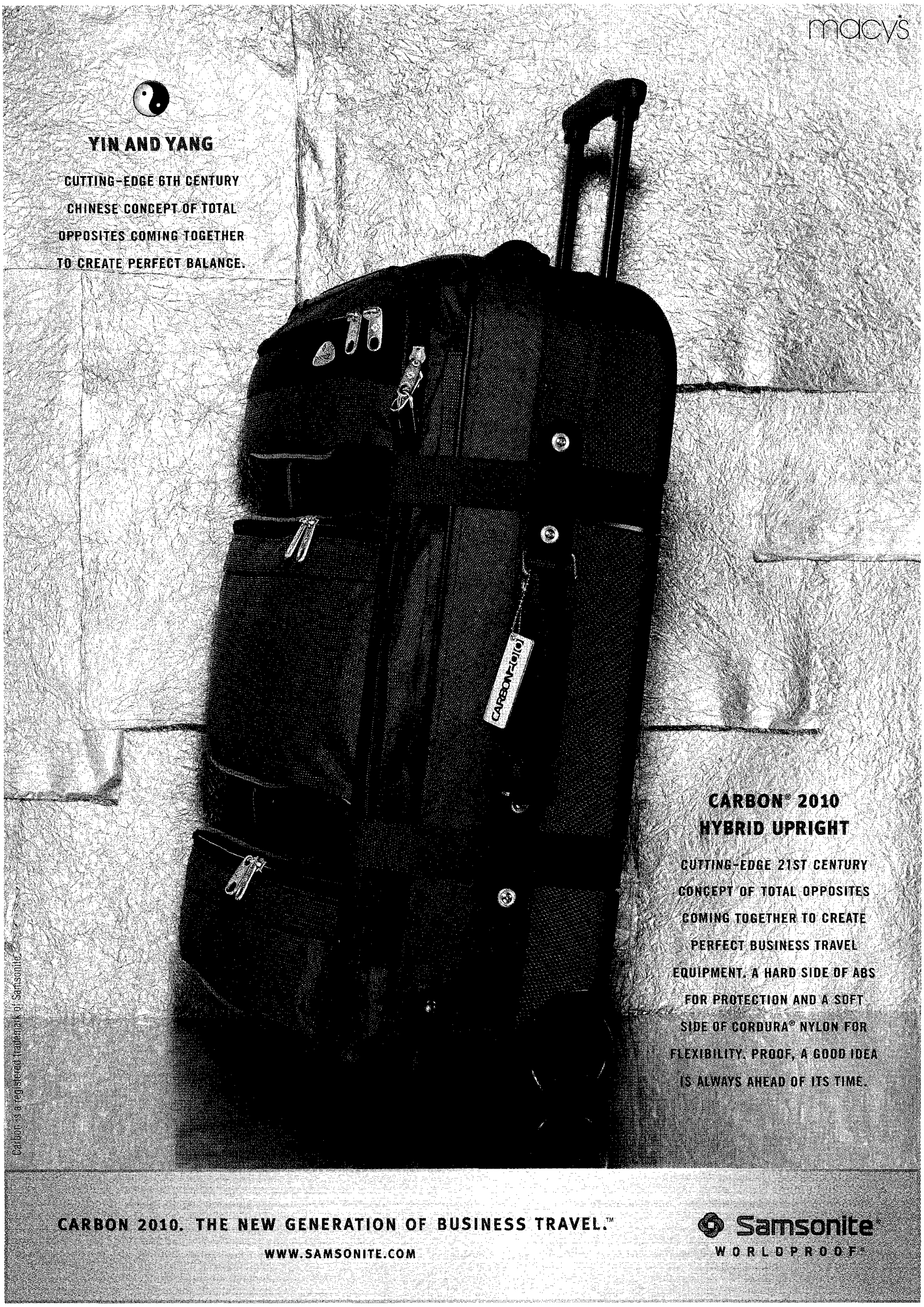

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

ABIE'S ISLAND ROSE
The Jewish Repertory Theatre presents a musical comedy about a romance between a Jewish med student from New York and an Afro-Caribbean nurse. In previews though May 6. Opens May 7 at 7. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000.)

THE ACTING COMPANY
The touring troupe is in town to present repertory performances of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's "The Rivals" (May 2-9) and Shakespeare's "Macbeth" (May 11-13). (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

THE DESIGNATED MOURNER
Wallace Shawn, Deborah Eisenberg, and Larry Pine make up the cast in Mr. Shawn's 1996 play, directed by André Gregory. In previews. (21 South William Street. 532-8887.)

THE LARAMIE PROJECT
A drama about the murder of gay-hate victim Matthew Shepard, written and directed by Moisés Kaufman ("Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde"). In previews. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

LI'L BROWN BROTHERS/NIKIMALIKA (I'VE BEEN TO AMERICA)
Chris B. Millado's drama examines the 1904 St. Louis World Exposition's Philippine Exhibit, in which Filipinos were put on display as savages. In previews through May 6. Opens May 7 at 7. (Grove Street Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 581-8896.)

SMALL CRAFT WARNING
An encore revival by the Worth Street Theatre of their 1999 staging of the Tennessee Williams play. David Greenspan leads the cast. In previews May 4-7. Opens May 8 at 8. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St. 532-8887.)

SONG OF SONGS
Sholom Aleichem's love story is the basis for this musical, with a book by Daniel Goldstein and a score by Michael Friedman. Previews begin May 4. (Greenwich Street Theatre, 547 Greenwich St. 592-4005.)

TWO-HEADED
A tragicomedy by Julia Jensen, set on the Utah frontier in the nineteenth century. In previews. (Women's Project Theatre, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

WAKE UP AND SMELL THE COFFEE
Eric Bogosian's latest solo show, directed by Jo Bonney. Preview on May 3. Opens May 4 at 8. (Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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WHEN THEY SPEAK OF RITA
Daisy B. Foote's drama, about a discontented housewife in rural New Hampshire. Previews begin May 3. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

THE WILD DUCK
The Century Center's Ibsen series continues with the playwright's 1884 drama. Preview on May 3. Opens May 4 at 8. (111 E. 15th St. 982-6782.)

WONDERFUL TOWN
City Center's Encores! series wraps up the season with the 1953 Leonard Bernstein–Betty Comden–Adolph Green musical. Donna Murphy heads the cast. May 4-5 at 8, May 6 at 2 and 8, and May 7 at 6:30. (131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AIDA
Disney's new musical—five years in the making and a product of Pharaonic expense—is, if not perfect, a lively, polished entertainment with bursts of joyful flamboyance worthy of its composer, Elton John. (Tim Rice's lyrics are mostly plodding and clunky, but they don't detract too much from the proceedings.) The two female leads—Heather Headley, as Aida, and Sherie René Scott, as Amneris—shine in their different ways, and Bob Crowley's brilliant sets give the show both visual dazzle and emotional resonance. Also with Adam Pascal, as Radames, who, looking like a Harlequin-romance cover model and sounding a little like Michael Bolton, doesn't quite pack the punch that his two co-stars do. Directed by Robert Falls. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/10/00.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.)

AMADEUS
From London, a revival of Peter Shaffer's drama, starring Michael Sheen as Mozart and David Suchet as Salieri. Sir Peter Hall is the director. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

AMERICAN BUFFALO
In the Atlantic Theatre Company's lucid but uninspired staging of David Mamet's great 1975 play, the actors' chemistry never quite fills out the humiliated hearts of their characters—a junk-shop owner named Don (Philip Baker Hall), his young junkie gofer (the poignant, baby-faced Mark Webber), and Teach (the expert William H. Macy), a petty criminal who kisses himself in on a scam to steal back a nickel for which some dealer has paid Don ninety dollars. Still, Mamet's pitch-perfect dialogue, the depth of his characterization and his sense of the corroded social fabric, the wild humor and the sadness in the threadbare world he so completely imagines, are some kind of theatrical miracle. (3/27/00) (336 W. 20th St. 239-6200. Closes May 21.)

THE BOMB-ITTY OF ERRORS
In this exuberant take on "The Comedy of Errors," the action has been shifted to a hip-hop realm, and the basic ideas remain the same, but the four extravagantly talented writer-actors (who play all of the parts) make it seem altogether new. (45 Bleecker, 45 Bleecker St., at Lafayette St. 307-4100.)

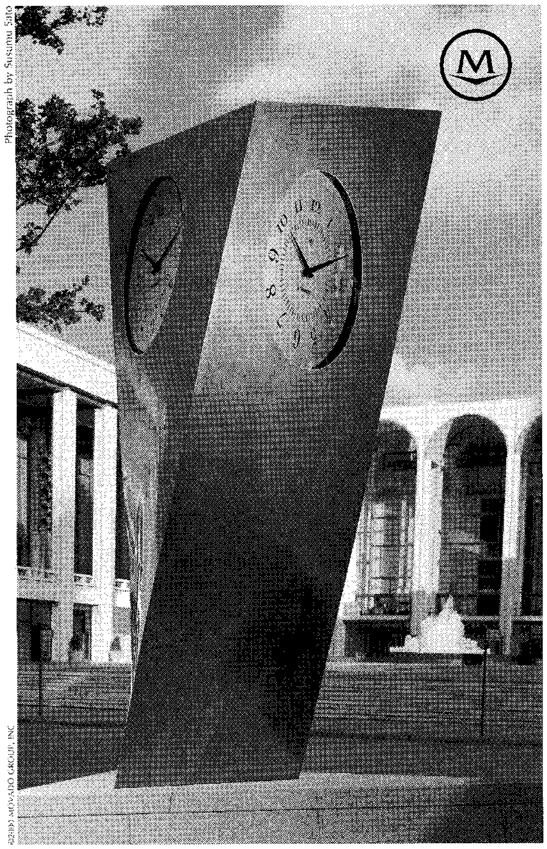
COBB
In his brilliantly constructed play about baseball's greatest hitter and most brutal schoolyard bully, Lee Blessing places three actors (Michael Cullen, Matt Mabe, and Michael Sabatino) onstage together to portray Tyrus Raymond Cobb, who reminisces from the afterlife and interacts with himself at various stages in his professional and personal life. For Cobb, baseball was a place to stake kingship, but here he's haunted by a forgotten legend, Negro Leaguer and Hall of Famer Oscar Charleston, who forces him to confront the social injustices he sheepishly dodged during his lifetime, denying himself, as well as the nation, a chance at true greatness. Clark Jackson releases a triumphant monologue as the embittered yet dignified Charleston. (Melting Pot Theatre, 311 W. 43rd St. 279-4200. Closes May 20.)

CONTACT
The director and choreographer Susan Stroman's dance play, a triptych of simple stories about the various forms of human connection and the atmosphere of longing, is a big-hearted, witty crowd-pleaser. (10/18-25/99) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

COPENHAGEN
Michael Frayn's drama, which was inspired by a meeting in 1941 between the German physicist Werner Heisenberg and his Danish counterpart Niels Bohr. Michael Blakemore is the director. (4/24 & 5/1/00) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE DIRECTOR
The playwright Nancy Hasty asks whether acting (which is essentially lying) can reveal deeper truth. It's a smart play, and, though it's not entirely satisfying intellectually, John Shea's brilliant performance as the director almost makes it seem so. (Arclight, 152 W. 71st St. 279-4200.)

DIRTY BLONDE
Claudia Shear and James Lapine's cunningly written, raffish play, which was staged earlier this year at New York Theatre Workshop, has moved to Broadway. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)



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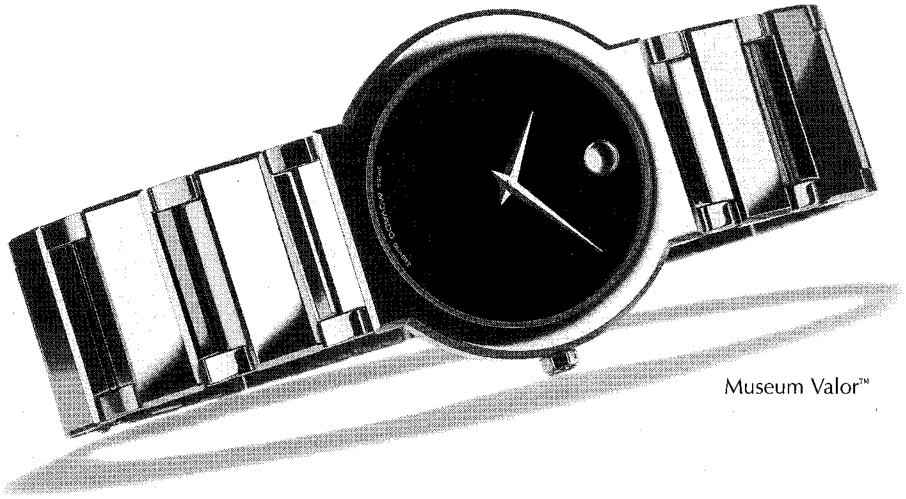

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THE GREEN BIRD
The director Julie Taymor brings Carlo Gozzi's fairy tale to the stage with puppets, masks, and live performers. The music is by Elliot Goldenthal. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

HOTEL UNIVERSE
The Blue Light Theatre Company wraps up the season with Philip Barry's 1930 play, about a group of American expatriates vacationing on the French Riviera after the First World War. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 279-4200.)

JACKIE MASON: MUCH ADO ABOUT EVERYTHING
The comic is back on Broadway. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

JAMES BALDWIN: A SOUL ON FIRE
Howard Simon's drama is set in New York City in 1963, during a discussion of race relations which James Baldwin set up with then Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 353-1176. Closes May 7.)

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR
To paraphrase Woody Allen: If Jesus Christ were alive today, he'd never stop throwing up. For those of us with less than Christ-like standards, though, this misguided Broadway revival of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's 1971 musical version of the Saviour's last days on earth is less nauseating than it is plain disappointing. The show, which began as a concept album and should have stayed one, starts out by asking the tantalizing question "What's the buzz?" but never delivers a theatrically satisfying answer. Still, with its archaic whiff of right-wing outrage and singable seventies-rock score, it's fun for nostalgia's sake. Gale Edwards is the director. (Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

JITNEY
August Wilson's first play, set in 1977, about the lives of a group of Pittsburgh gypsy-cab drivers. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

KISS ME, KATE
With all its admirable expertise and its various delights, this production of the Cole Porter musical is oddly earthbound: it comes down to the vexing issue of chemistry. The leads, Marin Mazzie and Brian Stokes Mitchell, are expert players, but they are not—in the true meaning of the words—star performers. (11/29/99) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

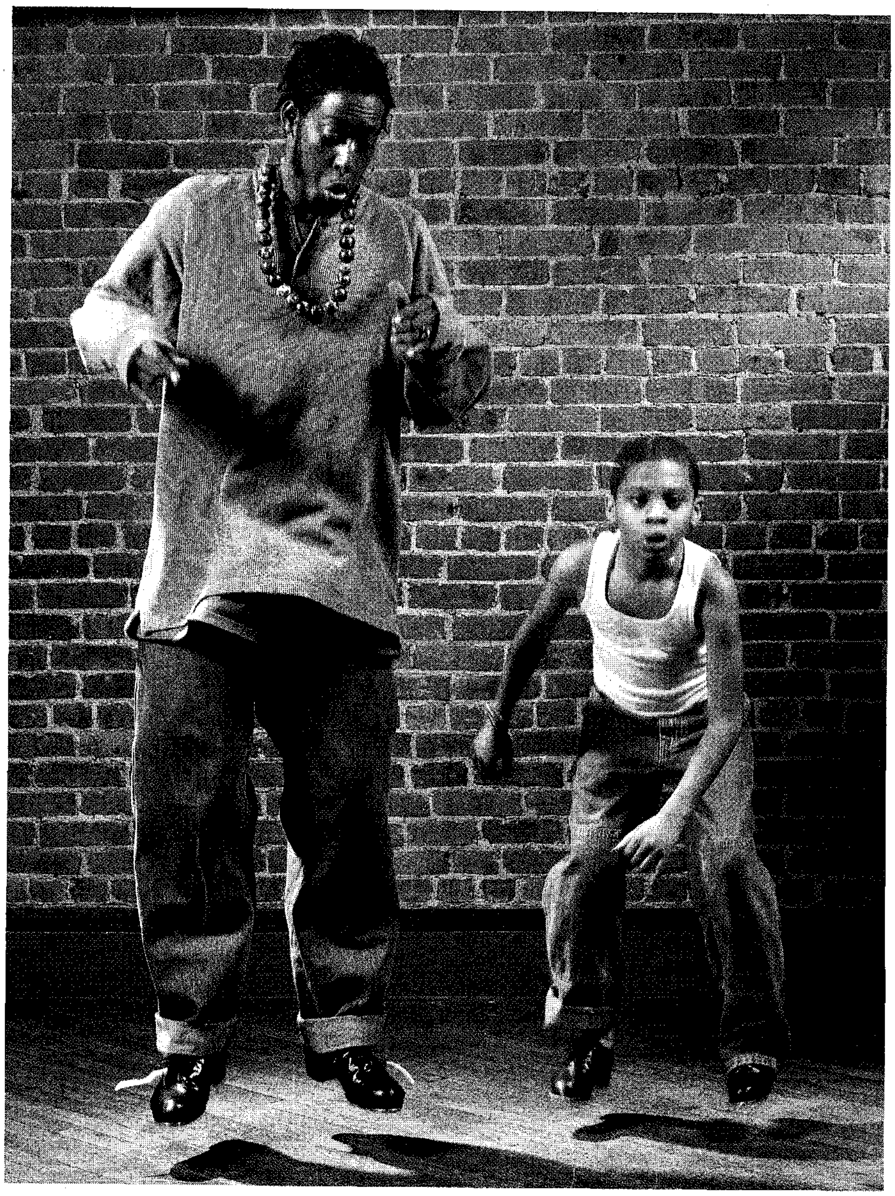
MANCHILD IN THE PROMISED LAND
Claude Brown's 1965 autobiographical novel, about growing up in Harlem, adapted for the stage by Wynn Handman and Joseph Edward. (American Place Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. 239-6200.)

A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN
A solid and satisfying revival of Eugene O'Neill's 1943 drama. Gabriel Byrne's performance as James Tyrone, an alcoholic actor who returns to his Connecticut farm from New York to unburden himself in the arms of the earth mother Josie (Cherry Jones), is something to see: though his character is half-dead from drink, Byrne's vivid portrait conjures all the dimensions of the tortured emotion that got him there. Daniel Sullivan directed. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

THE MUSIC MAN
Craig Bierko is Professor Harold Hill, and Rebecca Luker is Marian the Librarian, in a revival of Meredith Willson's 1957 musical. Susan Stroman is the director. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

OUR LADY OF SLIGO
Sinéad Cusack has the leading role in Sebastian Barry's latest drama, under the direction of Max Stafford-Clark. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

THE REAL THING
Before the young British playwright Patrick Marber's drama about the excruciating machinations of coupledom, "Closer" (1997), there was this one by the seasoned British playwright Tom Stoppard, in 1984; in comparison, Stoppard's take seems surprisingly innocent (how did we ever manage to torture one another without computers?). But revived here with an excellent cast (especially Stephen Dillane) and subtle direction by David Leveaux, the elder playwright's most accessible work remains the wittiest, sharpest look at that twisted thing called love to come around in decades. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)


Growing tap talents Bakaari Wilder (from "The Beat," at Context Studios—see Dance) and Cartier A. Williams (on tour with Savion Glover in "Foot Notes") step out together.

AMY ARBUS

THE RIDE DOWN MT. MORGAN
"Why have I been condemned?" the aptly named bigamist Lyman Felt (Patrick Stewart) asks, rather whinily, toward the end of Arthur Miller's latest play, an examination of the seeming impossibility of fidelity, or, at least, lifelong marriage. And you trust that Lyman is truly in the dark about how he could be convicted of having love for two women—the childlike but uptight and aging Wasp he first married (the wonderful Frances Conroy), and a sexy, sophisticated, but oblivious young Jew (Katy Selverstone). The problem with Miller's project is that his lying Lyman is no longer in love with his first wife at all, and he seems to have only lust for the second. In the end, it makes a really good case for divorce. David Esbjornson directed. (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

ROSE
Olympia Dukakis has the title role in a new play by Martin Sherman, which traces a Jewish woman's life, from her childhood in Russia to the Warsaw ghettos to Miami Beach. Nancy Meckler is the director. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER
The musical, based on the 1977 film. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

SWING!
No plot, just a hot band, Olympic-class dancers, and major panties—this show, a tribute to swing and its dance counterpart, the Lindy (mother of the jitterbug), lives up to its name. It swings. Directed and choreographed by Lynne Taylor-Corbett. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

TALLER THAN A DWARF
From the pen of Elaine May, a new comedy starring Matthew Broderick and Parker Posey and directed by Alan Arkin. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

THE TIME OF THE CUCKOO
Arthur Laurents' 1953 play, set in Venice, stars Debra Munk as a romantically deprived American woman (or spinster, as they called them in the old days) who gets a chance at a vacation affair with an Italian shop owner. It's a lovely production of a dated play, with roundly good acting. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes May 7.)

TRUE WEST
A thrilling revival of Sam Shepard's 1980 play, directed by Matthew Warchus. It's a droll tall tale of sibling rivalry, in which an intrusive, beer-swilling outlaw named Lee and his brother, Austin, a put-upon Ivy League screenwriter, face off in their vacationing mother's tidy modern kitchen. John C.

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Reilly's roaring, as Lee, and Philip Seymour Hoffman's repressed hostility, as Austin, make for a wonderful contrast and a satisfyingly equal battle of wills, but when the actors switch roles (every few performances), Hoffman's derelict eyes, slurred sea-dog voice, and preternatural comic skills make the contest entertaining but lopsided. (3/27/00) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

UNCLE VANYA
Derek Jacobi, Laura Linney, Brian Murray, and Roger Rees take on Chekhov's play, under the direction of Michael Mayer. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

THE VALLEY OF IAO
Lee Nagrin's new performance piece is based on conversations with her brother, about his life as an itinerant street preacher in Maui. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Closes May 14.)

WAITING IN THE WINGS
In the best of Noël Coward's postwar plays, old gallant theatricals duke it out in a retirement home, where they fire off some terrific one-liners. Although the play itself is somewhat creaky, the pros who bring it to life here aren't. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

THE WAVERLY GALLERY
Eileen Heckart portrays an aging Greenwich Village art dealer who must give up her gallery, in a new play by Kenneth Lonergan. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

THE WILD PARTY
Joseph Moncure March's Jazz Age poem is the basis for Michael John LaChiusa and George C. Wolfe's new musical, starring Mandy Patinkin, Eartha Kitt, and Toni Collette. Mr. Wolfe is the director. (4/24 & 5/1/00) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

YARD GAL
From London's Royal Court Theatre, Rebecca Prichard's drama about two juvenile delinquents on the run in London. (MCC, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765.)

LONG RUNS

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN
Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4747.

BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

CATS
Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.

CHICAGO
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

DAME EDNA: THE ROYAL TOUR
Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

DE LA GUARDA
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.

DINNER WITH FRIENDS
Variety Arts, 110 Third Ave., at 14th St. 239-6200.

THE FANTASTICKS
Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.

FOOTLOOSE
Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY
Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200.

FOSSE
Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

FULLY COMMITTED
Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.

I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

JEKYLL & HYDE
Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

LES MISÉRABLES
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

MISS SAIGON
Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.

OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS
John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.

PERFECT CRIME
Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.

STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477.

TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING
St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.

THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
May 3 at 7:30: The spring gala, featuring two new works by Peter Martins ("Slonimsky's Earbox" and "Todo Buenos Aires") and one apiece from Christopher Wheeldon ("Mercurial Manoeuvres") and Helgi Tomasson ("Prism"). ♦ May 4 at 8: "Square Dance," "Fancy Free," and "The Beethoven Seventh." ♦ May 5 at 8: "Glass Pieces," "In the Night," and "West Side Story Suite." ♦ May 6 at 2: "Prism," "In the Night," "Slonimsky's Earbox," and "Western Symphony." ♦ May 6 at 8: "Symphony in C," "Stabat Mater," and "West Side Story Suite." ♦ May 7 at 3: "Square Dance," "The Beethoven Seventh," and "Fancy Free." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 25.)

AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
The opening of the sixtieth-anniversary season. May 8 at 6:30: The opening-night gala, with a series of pas de deux and a première of a new work by Twyla Tharp. ♦ May 9 at 8: "Theme and Variations," "Jardin aux Lilas," "Other Dances," and "Variations on a Theme by Haydn." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through July 1.)

TRISHA BROWN DANCE COMPANY
To celebrate its thirtieth-anniversary season, the troupe fills a fortnight of dates with revivals, recent repertory, and three premières, including "Rapture to Leon James," an homage to the thirties-era Savoy Ballroom dancer. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. May 2-5 and May 9 at 8, May 6 at 2 and 8, and May 7 at 2 and 7:30. Through May 14.)

SEÁN CURRAN COMPANY
The choreographer remains a dazzling interpreter of his own pyrotechnic footwork: this season he adds one solo, "Approaching a City," to his repertory. But, despite these individual gifts, his reputation of late rests more on his thoughtful group works. The three on this program include "Six Laments," a haunting series of solos and duets danced in front of a set of venetian blinds on which the faces of friends appear and vanish. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. May 4-7 at 8:30. Through May 14.)

"$ SHOT"
The choreographer Jennifer Lacey borrows the movement vocabulary of pornography. The composer Zeena Parkins provides her usual inventively intimate score, and French artist Nadia Lauro provides other appropriate distractions. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. May 3-6 at 8 and May 6 at 3.)

"FOXHOLE"
The choreographers Tanya Gagne and Karen Sherman provide a sort of knife-and-leather power fantasy of girl gangs on the streets of New York at night. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. May 4-7 at 8:30.)

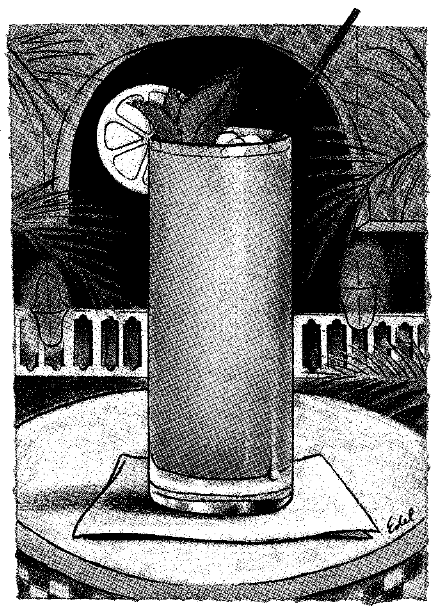
"THE BEAT"
Former "Stomp" member Kamal Sinclair collaborates with playwright Robbie McCauley and poet Mustafa Shakir in a dance-theatre work that features Bakaari Wilder, the slack and lanky tapper whose easy cool countered Savion Glover's percussive heat in "Bring in da Noise." (Context Studios, 28 Avenue A, at 2nd St. 802-9350. May 4-6 at 8. Through May 20.)

"MYTH OF A VOYAGE"
The latest Martha@Mother, the dance showcase hosted by Richard Move in the guise of Martha Graham, offers performances by Mikhail Baryshnikov, Ida Nevasayneva of Les Ballets Trockadero, and Herbin (Tamango) Van Cayseele. (875 Washington St. 924-0077. May 3 at 8 and 10 and May 4-5 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

REVEREND HORTON HEAT
The psychobilly drill sergeant brings his crazy, industrial-strength rockabilly to town. Be sure to show up in time to catch the opening act, Hank Williams III. The grandson of country music's biggest legend has a début album, "Risin' Outlaw," that's as pure and true to its roots as backcountry moonshine. But Williams has also done time in Atlanta punk bands, and he promises to turn this show into a rocking affair. (Roxy, 515 W. 18th St. 307-7171. May 5 at 8.)

"THE FIRE AT KEATON'S BAR & GRILL"
Jazz saxophonist Roy Nathanson performs his concept album about an organ bar in Charleston, South Carolina, with help from Elvis Costello, Deborah Harry, Richard Butler, Nancy King, and others. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 718-858-2424. May 5 at 8 and 10:30 and May 6 at 8.)



NEWLY MINTED *"The ingredients here are like a spice rack," says Michael Smith, the bartender at Layla (211 West Broadway; 431-0700), as he gestures at a colorful array of liquor bottles on glass shelves behind him. Three years ago, on a quiet afternoon before the Kentucky Derby, Smith decided to reinvent the mint julep. In place of the traditional bourbon, he substituted apricot brandy, and added fresh lemon juice, muddled mint, simple syrup, and crushed ice. The result, dubbed the Derby, is a brisk and refreshing classic in its own right. "I thought I'd sell maybe a dozen that afternoon," says Smith. "We sold over a hundred. I used up all the mint in the restaurant."*

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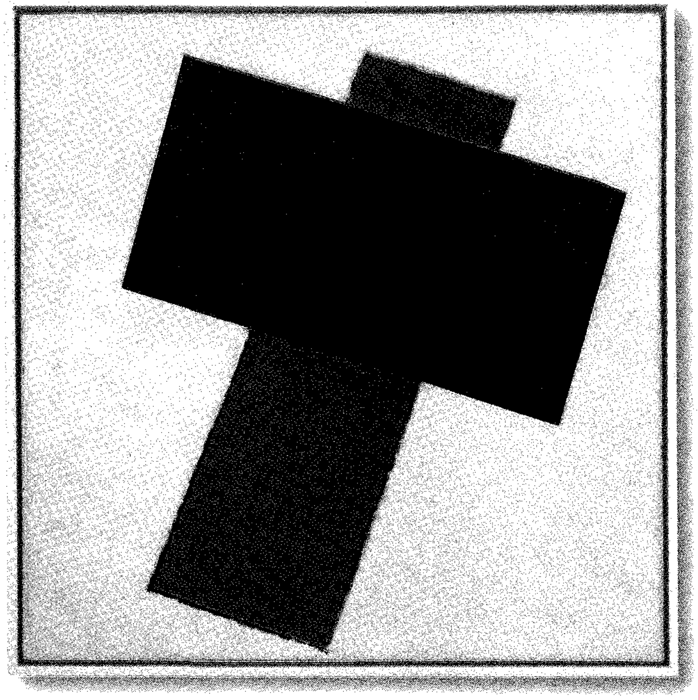

Kazimir Malevich, ***Suprematist Composition***, circa 1919-1920
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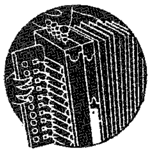
"THE LOST JAZZ SHRINES"
This ingenious gig must be a dream come true for tenor saxophonist Mark Turner, a smart young player who combines the opposing styles of the deeply emotional John Coltrane and the more formal Warne Marsh, a disciple of the late Lennie Tristano and a frequent bandmate of alto saxophonist Lee Konitz. Tonight Turner finds himself onstage with Konitz saluting Tristano, a brilliant pianist, composer, and theorist whose cool musical aesthetic is severely, and undeservedly, out of fashion. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 346-8510. May 6 at 7:30.)

"DUETS ON THE HUDSON"
Pianist Mal Waldron was immortalized in Frank O'Hara's famous poem, "The Day Lady Died." Off the page, he's still playing, and he'll be appearing with soprano saxophonist Steve Lacy, whose plangent tone and exacting yet edgy improvisations complement Waldron perfectly. As a duo, they make less sound like much, much more. ♦ Although the Dutch iconoclasts Misha Mengelberg and Han Bennink have collaborated since the early sixties, it's been quite some time since they were heard in a duet setting. Mengelberg is a daring yet historically conscious pianist, composer, arranger, and bandleader—although American audiences get to sample only a fraction of his recordings—and he goes way back with drummer Bennink, all the way

MUSIC NOTES



LOCAL FLAVOR
The New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, which wraps up this Sunday, presents more than three hundred acts in its seven-day run. Choosing which band to watch is as difficult as deciding between the turtle soup au sherry and the creole gumbo du jour at Commander's Palace. But as they say in southwestern Louisiana, "It's all good."

"The Main Event: Live at the Maple Leaf" (Louisiana Red Hot Records), the latest album from the Crescent City's ReBirth Brass Band, quickly sold out when it was first released during last year's festival as a limited-edition disk. Now available nationwide, the album captures the brass-heavy septet in a sweaty, entirely satisfying set highlighted by a hard-charging interpretation of Bobby Womack's "It's All Over Now" and "The Main Event," a thirty-minute jam that incorporates such pop elements as the melody from TLC's "Waterfalls." The recording preserves the live feel of a club show perfectly; in fact, the jubilant crowd, which cheers and chants throughout, deserves a performance credit.

Eunice, Louisiana, native Marc Savoy is an accomplished accordion maker and player as well as an insistent crusader for Cajun culture. His Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band—which features his wife, Ann, on guitar, and Beausoleil fiddler Michael Doucet—released three albums in the nineteen-eighties before taking a break. The group's return to recording, **"Sam's Big Rooster"** (Arhoolie), mixes traditional songs and originals, with Ann Savoy using French dialect and earthy phrasing to capture the melancholy of backcountry life. But a pair of rollicking live tunes, as well as lighthearted songs such as "Les Culottes à Lollypop (Lollypop's Underwear)," round out this energetic collection.

Like the great zydeco innovator Clifton Chenier, Nathan Williams expresses himself best with a big piano-key accordion. On **"Let's Go!"** (Rounder), the latest from his band, Nathan & the Zydeco Cha Chas, Williams pumps out fourteen original songs distinguished by rock-solid grooves and a desire to update the traditional zydeco formula. In a sweet baritone, Williams sings of good times, bad times, and the times to "get in your car and go to the trail ride, no matter how far."

—*John J. Donohue*

back to Eric Dolphy's 1964 album, "Last Date." Bennink was on his best behavior for that recording—these days, he's just as willing to perform his percussion on a pair of wooden shoes, a newspaper, or even his own body. His technical excellence and innate musicality let him get away with all his shenanigans. (Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building, 165 W. 65th St. 721-6500. May 6-7 at 8.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BAM CAFÉ
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-636-4139)—May 5: Acoustic blues guitarist and singer **Rocky Lawrence,** who for the past four years has devoted himself to the study of Robert Johnson's music.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—May 4: The trademark, herky-jerky little pop songs of **They Might Be Giants.** May 8: **Kid Koala** (né Eric San) is a twenty-five-year-old Chinese-Canadian hero of the turntable world. Three years after "Scratchhappyland," his much admired début on the Ninja Tunes label, Koala returns with "Carpal Tunnel Syndrome," a dark, inspiring, album that makes you feel as if you're in your own movie.

FEZ
380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—May 5-6: **Joe McGinty's Loser's Lounge** pays playful homage to the music of E.L.O. May 8: Old 97's guitarist **Rhett Miller.** The **Mingus Big Band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—May 3: The culture-jamming work of **Negativland,** which is on its first tour in seven years. May 5: Complex, state-of-the-art electronic music from the German duo of Andi Toma and Jan St. Werner, otherwise known as **Mouse on Mars.** With **Trans Am,** a Washington, D.C., trio that creates instrumental music as ambitious and involved as an omnibus spending bill.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (539-8777)—May 4: Led by the breathy alto of Angelina Teresa Iapaola, the Montreal-based band **Lullaby Baxter Trio** (Iapaola's stage name is inspired by the character played by Jack Lemmon in the 1960 film "The Apartment") serves up lighthearted music that winningly combines a variety of styles—lounge, jazz, bossa nova, rock—with Iapaola's whimsical lyrics. The band is touring in support of its début album, "Capable Egg."

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—May 3: Up-and-coming neo-folkie **Stephan Smith.** May 5: **Barbez,** a Brooklyn-based act that produces woozy café rock laden with elements of klezmer, French *musette,* punk, and tango, experiments with an instrumental show. May 8: Singer-songwriter Dean Wilson looked to the television show "The Man from U.N.C.L.E." to pick the name for his band, **Illyah Kuryahkin,** and Wilson sings like a spy caught out in the rain: he has a secretive, whispery rasp, and his songs are full of allusions awaiting decoding.

MERCURY LOUNGE
217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—May 4: When country-rock rebel Steve Earle heard **Marah's** 1998 début, "Let's Cut the Crap and Hook Up Later on Tonight," he quickly signed them to his label, E-Squared. Their follow-up album, the recently released "Kids in Philly," conjures up the gritty streets of this quartet's hometown and offers salvation through the banjo, guitar, and harmonica work of its lead vocalists, David and Serge Bielanko. With Drivin' n' Cryin' founder **Kevn Kinney,** whose latest solo release, "The Flower and the Knife," features contributions from Gov't Mule guitarist Warren Hayes and Blues Traveler harmonica player John Popper. May 5: The thoughtful instrumental post-rock of **Five Style.** May 6: Trippy yet wholesome country pop from Los Angeles's **Beachwood**

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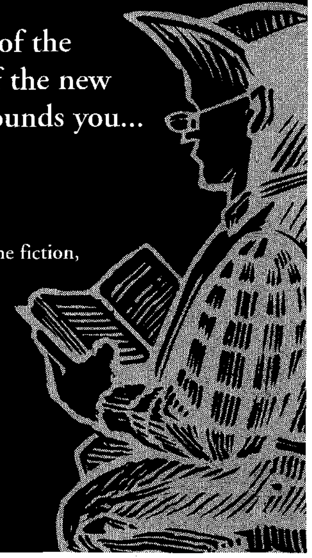

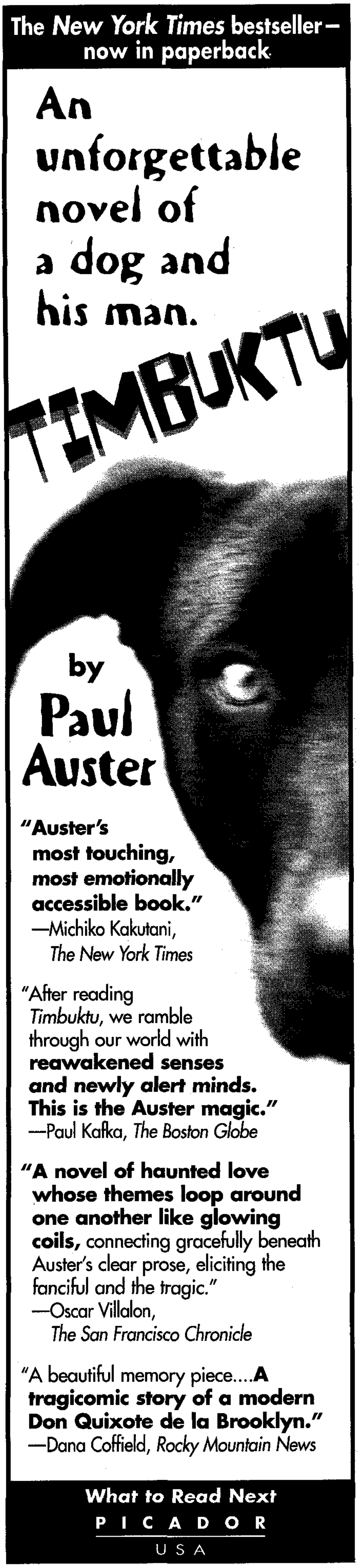

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—Paul Kafka, *The Boston Globe*

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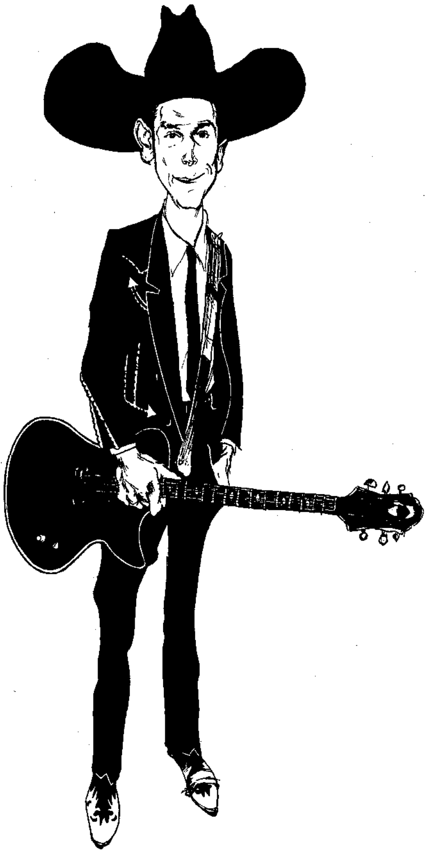
—Oscar Villalon, *The San Francisco Chronicle*

"A beautiful memory piece....**A tragicomic story of a modern Don Quixote de la Brooklyn."**
—Dana Coffield, *Rocky Mountain News*

What to Read Next
PICADOR
USA

Sparks, whose self-titled début album is an interstellar delight. With former Belly guitarist **Tom Gorman.** May 7: The **Wild Colonials,** once the salonistes of the L.A. music scene (Rickie Lee Jones appeared on the band's 1996 CD, "This Can't Be Life"), have since been bounced from the majors. Fortunately, the band soldiers on, driven by Angela McCluskey's heartfelt honey-and-hot-sauce vocals.

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—**Eszter Balint,** a Budapest-born chanteuse and violinist, drops by on May 7. Balint, who played the deliciously sexy Hungarian cousin in Jim Jarmusch's "Stranger than Paradise," is a warm and expressive singer. Her début album, "Flicker," is full of melancholic songs with dark melodies and more upbeat tunes replete with black humor, as well as an astounding ballad, "Amsterdam Crown," which is as sad and wistful a song as has been written in recent memory.



Hank Williams III, at the Roxy.

ANDY FRIEDMAN

WETLANDS
161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—May 4: Dub specialist and frequent Lee (Scratch) Perry collaborator **Mad Professor.**

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—May 3-6: The **Dave Holland** quintet. Holland regularly assembles crack ensembles featuring smart players and off-kilter instrumentation. This lineup, for instance, includes saxophonist **Chris Potter,** trombonist **Robin Eubanks,** vibist **Steve Nelson,** and drummer **Billy Kilson.** But the focus only rarely strays from the leader, whose brilliant, industrial-strength bass work simultaneously grounds and propels the music, pushing his players into formidable post-bop improvisations. Dining.

IRIDIUM
48 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through May 7: The **Illinois Jacquet Big Band.** No jazz fan should miss a chance to hear the great tenor saxophonist Jacquet—his wide-as-Texas tone and melodic eloquence is matched by a bull-out-of-the-pen exuberance. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through May 7: The **Gary Bartz** quartet. The fallow years of the eighties are a long-ago memory for this brilliant, fully rejuvenated alto and soprano saxophonist, who is probably best known for his early-seventies stint with Miles Davis. Bartz is playing even better than he did some three decades ago, having traded in his dalliances with funk fusion for serious modal-bop improvising. His non-stop sets—with songs linked by the leader's soaring unaccompanied passages—are invariably thrilling. The music of John Coltrane is the focus of this engagement, and Bartz will be firmly in his element. Dining.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—May 6-7: The **Dewey Redman** quartet. An integral member of Ornette Coleman's and Keith Jarrett's bands before striking out on his own, tenor saxophonist Redman was fusing earth-toned blues, free-jazz excursions, and reverential bop and ballads long before his celebrated son Joshua even knew which end of the sax you blew into.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through May 7: The **Johnny Griffin** quartet. After blazing his way across Europe most of the year, the world's greatest bop tenor saxophonist swoops into New York for a hot second, scares the pants off his fellow saxmen, and then flits off again while they try to recuperate. While in these parts, the tenor terror surrounds himself with able young players and makes them work for every penny they earn. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—Were the paintings of the ancient Greeks finer than their sculptures? They thought so, but we'll never know for sure, since Apelles and his colleagues worked on wood panels that disintegrated millennia ago. But, thanks to the desert climate and the practice of funerary portraiture, examples of the lost Hellenistic tradition survived in Egypt. The seventy small portraits now on view in **"Ancient Faces: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt,"** the result of a fusion of Greco-Roman technique and local religious belief, offer a fascinating spectrum of achievement, and of physiognomy. Painted in encaustic or tempera, on wood panels and linen wrappings, they range from cursory stylizations to masterly likenesses. At best, these sombre, bearded men seem perfectly contemporary: they could be staring at us from miniature teleconferencing screens. Through May 7. ♦ A quarter century after it was first exhibited at the Met, the collection of the world's preëminent Japanophile, Mary Griggs Burke, is on view again. The two hundred or so works included in this exhibition represent only a fifth of Griggs's entire collection, but they have a vast range nonetheless, covering five thousand years of Japanese history. Beginning with a spectacular, mysterious Jomon-period pot from approximately 2500 B.C., the collection follows up with a stunning procession of Buddhist and Shinto sculpture, lacquerware, calligraphy, and prints, which carries the development of Japanese art up through the late nineteenth century. The centerpiece of the show, however, is Burke's collection of standing screens, with their views of village and country life glimpsed between wandering gold-leaf clouds. Through June 25. ♦ **"Painters in Paris: 1895-1950"** presents more than a hundred modernist works from the museum's collection, by thirty-eight masters. Through Dec. 31. ♦ **"Walker Evans,"** a comprehensive retrospective, the photographer's first. Through May 14. ♦ **"The World of Scholar's Rocks."** Through Aug. 20. ♦ **"Tilman Riemenschneider: Master Sculptor of the Late Middle Ages."** Through May 14. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

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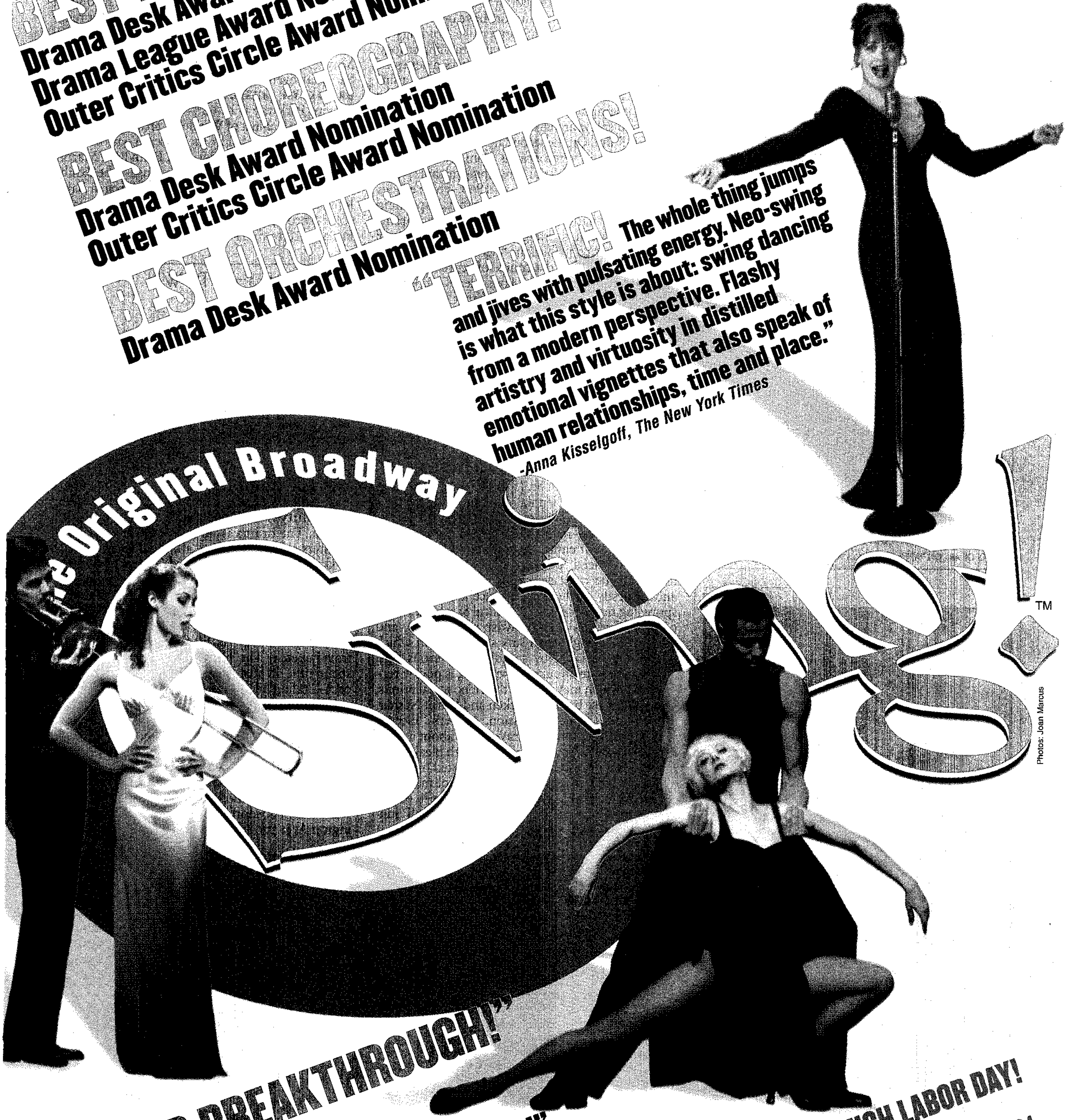
Drama Desk Award Nomination



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AUCTIONS

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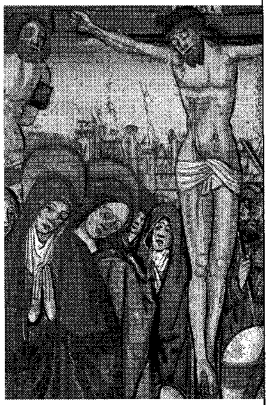

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Elena Diner, Jessy Hendrickson and Melissa Walter. Photo by Rodney Smith

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—MOMA goes multiplex with the launch of **"Making Choices,"** the first eleven segments of an eventual twenty-four-part show, all concentrating on works made between 1920 and 1960. As they did for the recent "People, Places and Things," the curators have drawn exclusively from the museum's extensive holdings to mount the show. But, while that sprawling trilogy was a little disjointed, this show offers a series of tightly focussed exhibitions, several devoted to a single artist. A small gallery on the first floor features the lush photography of Man Ray; its larger next-door neighbor displays architectural drawings and models by Louis Kahn. On the second floor the succinctly titled "War" pairs photographs from the U.S. naval archives with Picasso's gut-wrenching grisaille painting "The Charnel House," from 1945, which echoes his masterpiece "Guernica." After that, happening upon the installation of etchings by still-life maestro Giorgio Morandi is strange, but soothing. Curator Robert Storr's contribution, "Modern Art Despite Modernism," charts the course of representational painting and includes a gorgeous Alex Katz portrait of his wife, Ada, which is so vital that it makes the models in the Philip Pearlstein painting to its right look like specimens in a morgue. Closing, in stages, on Aug. 22, Sept. 19, and Sept. 26. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—Selections from the permanent collection are on display. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—Wandering through the latest Biennial exhibition would be a pleasure—the installation is thoughtfully paced, spare, and clear—if only there were more art works that held one's attention. Instead the curatorial team has put together a "Stepford Wives" version of contemporary art: most everything looks placid, numb, and earnestly mediocre. The exceptions include a sprawling mobile by the whimsical Sarah Sze, a trio of John Currin's odes to Wasp pulchritude, and Robert Gober's ghoulish sink sculptures, in which faucets are replaced by spindly, cadaverous legs. Painting, despite its current liveliness, is poorly represented, which may be why the video installations, especially those by Doug Aitken and Shirin Neshat, make such a strong impression. Aitken's "Electric Earth," an eight-screen extravaganza about a zombielike black youth wandering through bleak parking lots and drugstores, is the designated hit of the show, but it's also an uncomfortably apt metaphor for the Biennial as a whole. Through June 4. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 9.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY
Central Park W. at 79th St. (769-5100)—The newly renovated Hayden Planetarium lets you enjoy a twenty-minute cosmic journey, narrated by Tom Hanks, which goes from Earth to the Milky Way out to the Virgo Supercluster, then through a black hole right back home. Reservations for regular Space Shows are advised, and available at 769-5200. ♦ **"Body Art: Marks of Identity."** Through May 29. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

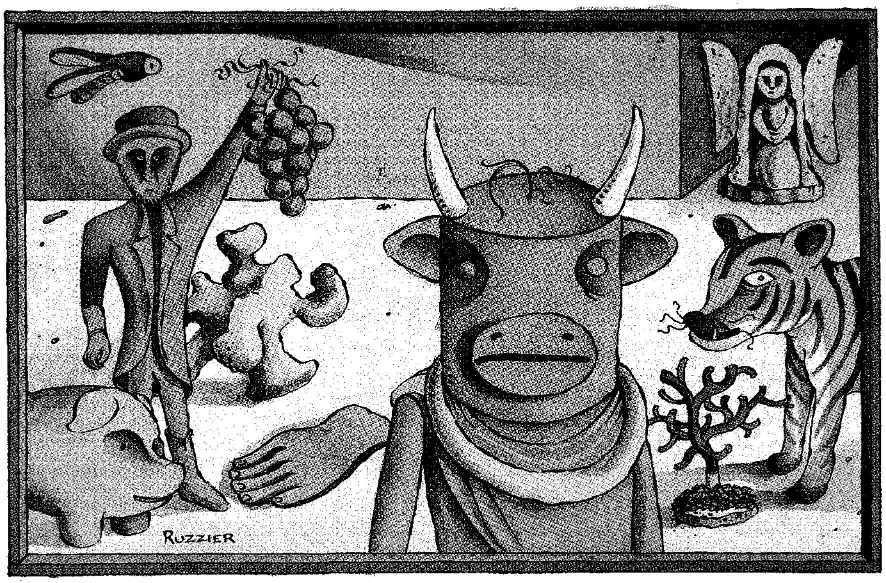
BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART
Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000)—**"The Guennol Collection: Cabinet of Wonders"** presents more than forty objects donated by the museum patrons Alastair Bradley Martin and his wife, Edith Park Martin, whose collection is noted for its range—the exhibit includes a Cornell box, a carved Zuni frog, a Babylonian dog sculpture, and a Beatrix Potter watercolor. Through May 7. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

LUCIAN FREUD
At the end of his Metropolitan retrospective in 1995, it looked as if the great English realist had decided to close his career with a cycle of "big works"—garish, portentously obese nudes that were, in effect, self-caricatures. Happily, he's moved on. Apart from a few stagy moments (a pair of male legs hiding under a bed, for example), these thirty-five recent pieces are triumphantly simple. The drama is all in Freud's brush, which registers surfaces—above all, the lichenous sheen of skin—with a supercharged fidelity that would have impressed Eakins or Courbet. Through May 19. (Acquavella, 18 E. 79th St. 734-6300.)

"ON SITE"
This exhibition celebrates a discipline as antiquated and hardy as fly-fishing: the architect's travel sketch. The nine architects included have spent time in just the kind of places you'd expect—Italian hill towns, English villages, Egyptian mosques, and Cambodian temples—and returned with notebooks full of orderly, lively drawings. There are tight annotated plans in black felt-tip pen, spongy, picturesque watercolors, and a range of jaunty linear views, the best of which (by Alexander Purves) are rendered in that plainest, most unforgiving medium, ballpoint pen. Through May 13. (Leubsdorf Gallery, Hunter College, Lexington Ave. at 68th St. 772-4991.)



"The Guennol Collection: Cabinet of Wonders," at the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

Short List

ALICE DALTON BROWN
Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. 759-2345. Through May 26.

FREDERIC EDWIN CHURCH
Berry-Hill, 11 E. 70th St. 744-2300. Through July 15.

RICHARD LONG
James Cohan, 41 W. 57th St. 755-7171. Through May 13.

FRANCIS PICABIA
Werner, 4 E. 77th St. 988-1623. Through June 3.

FAIRFIELD PORTER
AXA, Seventh Ave. at 52nd St. 554-4818. Through May 27.

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

DARA FRIEDMAN
Seventies nostalgia with a structuralist twist infiltrates Chelsea in this smart and sexy installation by a young artist whose work is also featured in the current Whitney Biennial. In three separate film loops, a model gazes seductively into the camera as her shirt pops open to reveal her bra. (The image recalls a famous Brooke Shields ad for Calvin Klein.) The soundtrack synchronizes each button's undoing with a burst of noise like the repeat of a gun. Friedman manages to both satirize and satisfy desire, a tidy trick. Through May 6. (Gavin Brown's Enterprise, 436 W. 15th St. 627-5258.)

GREGORY GREEN
The comically enterprising Mr. Green, who in an earlier project tried founding his own country, had to improvise a ramp to roll his latest work up the front steps and into the Feigen gallery. "M.I.T.A.R.B.U." (the Mobile Internet, Television and Radio Broadcast Unit) is housed in a fully restored and functioning '67 VW Westphalia Campmobile. It includes such after-factory options as a complete sound- and video-recording studio, a TV transmission system, a thirty-five-watt FM-radio transmitter, and Internet access. Green broadcasts at legal levels for now (viewers can pick up his programming with a pocket radio), but part of the pleasure is the implied threat of airwave anarchy (pointed up by an on-line guide to outwitting the F.C.C.). In the front room, Green has installed "GREGNIK" prototypes Two and Three, the artist's rough mock-ups of a private broadcast satellite he's considering launching. Through June 3. (535 W. 20th St. 929-0500.)

CLAUDIA HART AND SAM SAMORE
At first glance this creepy installation resembles a child-friendly waiting room: the walls are painted a nursery palette of mint, lavender, and pink, and a video game with two prancing pigs (and an extremely annoying soundtrack) is installed near a mirror that giggles when you look at it. But just as fairy tales have their poison apples, the text wrapped around the room like a frieze includes phrases like "stealing the newborn" and "supping human flesh." Through May 20. (Clinica Aesthetica, 427 W. 14th St. 243-5345.)

ROBERT TAPLIN
Our solar system's planets have been envisioned in many ways, but it's a safe bet that no one before Taplin has pictured them as a troupe of bald, beefy, middle-aged men—think Telly Savalas—dancing naked in pairs. Cast in plaster and translucent rice paper and illuminated from within by low-wattage bulbs, Taplin's figures make for an eerie, perplexing display. In a larger space, three surreal tableaux in forged steel from the eighties are on view, demonstrating a similar mix of clunky symbolism, skill, and idiosyncrasy. Through May 20. (Trans Hudson, 416 W. 13th St. 242-3232.)

Short List

JANET COHEN
Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. 243-5937. Through May 13.

CAIO FONSECA
Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave., at 27th St. 563-4474. Through May 13.

SERGIO RUZZIER

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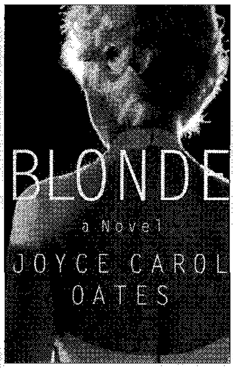

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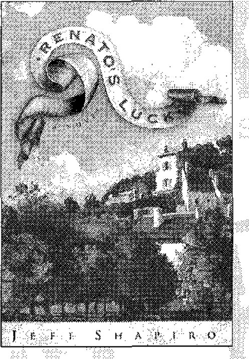

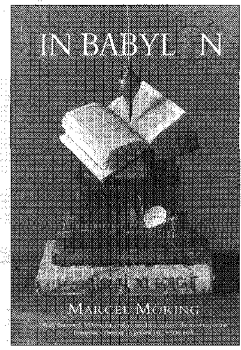

TOM CAMPBELL, REGULATOR BOOKSHOP, DURHAM NC
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KATHARINA FRITSCH
Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. 243-0200.
Through June 23.
PIPILOTTI RIST
Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St.
206-9100. Through May 27.
MAKI TAMURA
AC Project Room, 453 W. 17th St. 645-4970.
Through May 13.
ANDREA ZITTEL
Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000.
Through May 27.

GALLERIES-DOWNTOWN

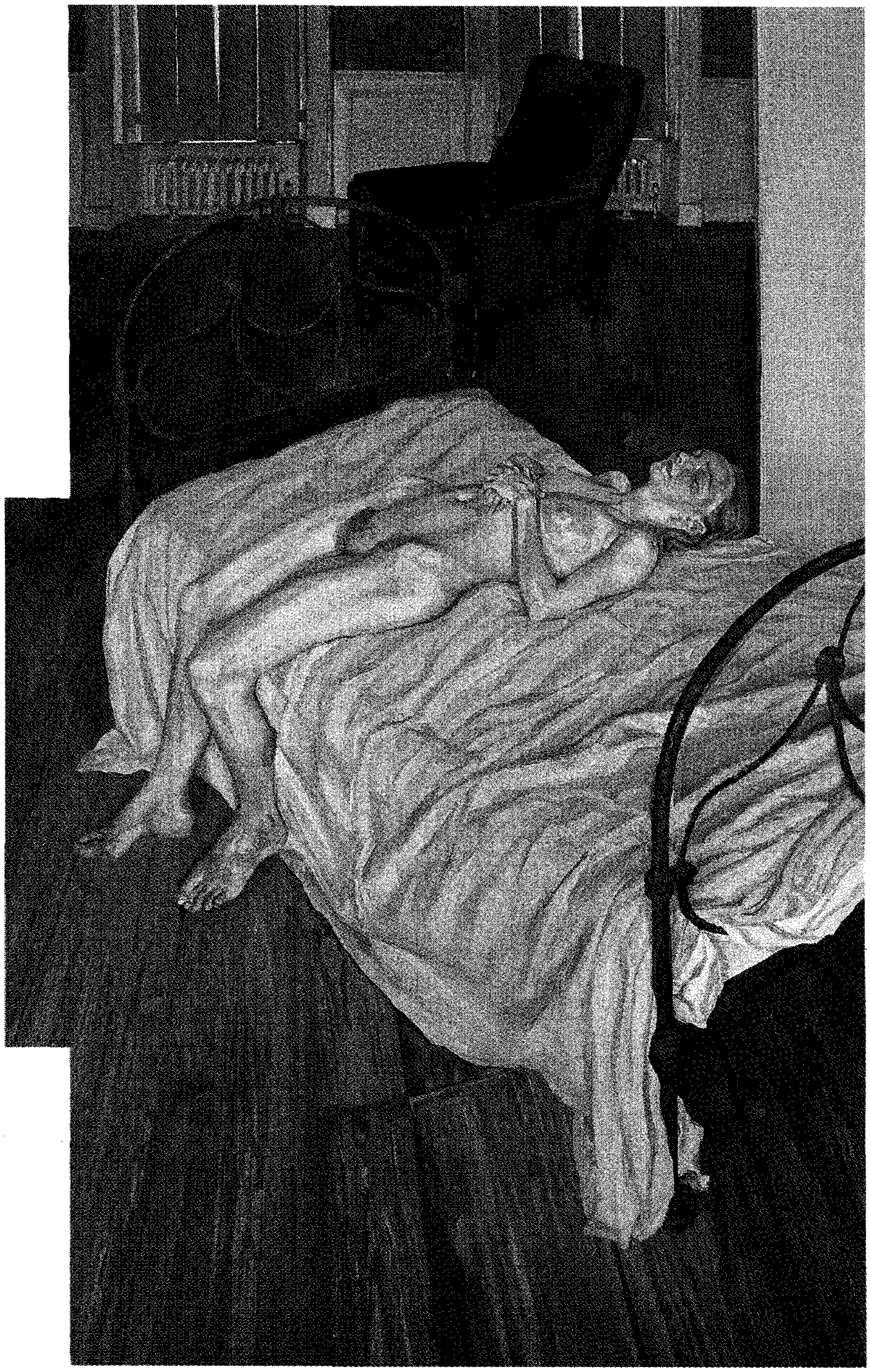
ROBERT SMITHSON
In the year that man first set foot on the moon, Smithson, the artist who turned "earthworks" into a branch of conceptual art, embarked on his own brand of cosmic exploration. "The Spiral Jetty," his fifteen-hundred-foot coil of basalt and earth arrayed in Utah's Great Salt Lake, has long since been reclaimed by nature and now lies deep under the salt water. But Smithson's monument to entropy remains visible in a short film by Nancy Holt and photographs by Gianfranco Gorgoni. Through May 12. (Ace, 275 Hudson St. 255-5599.)

Short List

CHUCK CLOSE
Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St.
431-9224. Through May 6.
JACQUELINE GOUREVITCH
DFN Gallery, 560 Broadway. 334-3400.
Through May 13.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
May 3: Notable nineteenth-century European paintings and sculpture, plus a sale of turn-of-the-century paintings from the Belle Époque. ♦ May 4-6: Auctions of Old Master, modern, and contemporary prints. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)
CHRISTIE'S
May 3: Nineteenth- and twentieth-century prints. ♦ May 8-9: A major auction of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art, including an exceptional Parisian scene by Caillebotte and, on the second day of the sale, Picasso's "Nature Mort aux Tulipes." ♦ May 9: Twentieth-century works on paper. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)
CHRISTIE'S EAST
May 3: American paintings. ♦ May 5: Musical instruments. ♦ May 6: Wine. ♦ May 8: Impressionist and contemporary art. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0430.)
DOYLE
A sale of rare sporting books; also, an auction of prints. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. May 3.)
SWANN
May 4: Old and rare books about medicine and science. ♦ May 8: Modernist posters. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710.)


"Naked Portrait with Red Chair," by Lucian Freud, at Acquavella.

PHOTOGRAPHY

JESSE ALEXANDER / SID AVERY
Jesse Alexander began chronicling Formula One in the early fifties, and had a taste for the sport's more elegant races—Le Mans, the Monaco Grand Prix—where everyone looked good, and everyone was willing to pose. His 1954 portrait of a Ferrari mechanic could easily be confused with a Hollywood head shot. These black-and-whites of cars, drivers, and paparazzi are mysteriously still and unblurred, as though Alexander's film were impervious to speed. In the same era, Sid Avery was taking "casual" shots of screen stars with their cars. Like a collection of outtakes from a star-studded B-flick, these pictures are stagy and a bit absurd: Rock Hudson, wearing nothing but white tennis shorts, hoses down his Olds; Lawrence Welk stands in a lot full of shiny vehicles, each one flanked by a friend in period finery. Avery's prints are indisputably fine, and offer the pleasurable challenge of sorting out who's more scrubbed, the cars or the people. Both shows through May 20. (Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway. 966-6223.)
TERRY EVANS
The Kansas-born Evans photographs her native state's amber waves of grain, and comparatively negligible signs of human life on the land. She has found her ideal subject in the ruins of the Joliet Arsenal, half reclaimed by the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. These landscapes, many aerial, dwarf a series of more scholarly botanical studies. Through May 20. (Richardson, 560 Broadway. 343-1255.)
RENA BASS FORMAN
These elegantly grand pictures, thirty by thirty inches each, were taken in serene, people-free places, including a fifteenth-century temple in Rajasthan and the backwaters of Kerala. In contrast to stereotypical images of India—crowded cities, underfed children—these photos offer scenes of hushed wonder, lent an added softness by a chestnut-brown finishing tone. The effect is such that a stone-carved statue of the goddess Lakshmi being bathed by elephants appears as supple as the inky waters of the Indian Ocean. Through May 21. (Benrubi, 152 E. 76th St. 517-3766.)
SALLY GALL / HAROLD FEINSTEIN
Gall's large, square, black-and-white interiors of caves and grottoes sparkle with an otherworldly luminescence that seems almost lunar. The twilit landscapes are inviting and yet simultaneously forbidding; you might want to step into the picture, but you wouldn't know what to do once you got there. Harold Feinstein's sensual color studies of flowers provide a strong contrast. Both shows through May 20. (Saul, 560 Broadway. 431-0747.)
THERESE MITCHELL
These recently rediscovered photographs by the wife of former *New Yorker* staff writer Joseph Mitchell are a visual companion to the profiles that made

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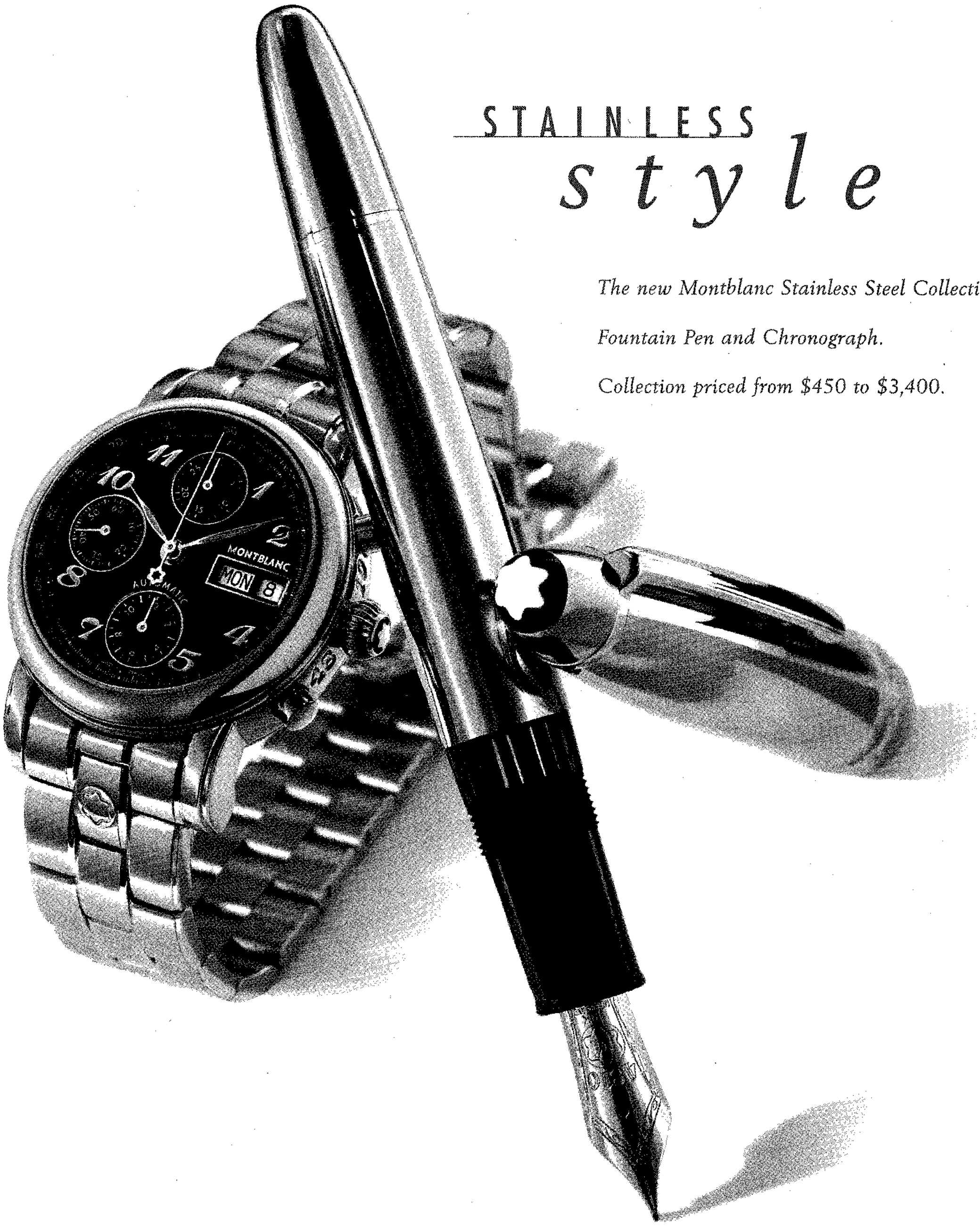

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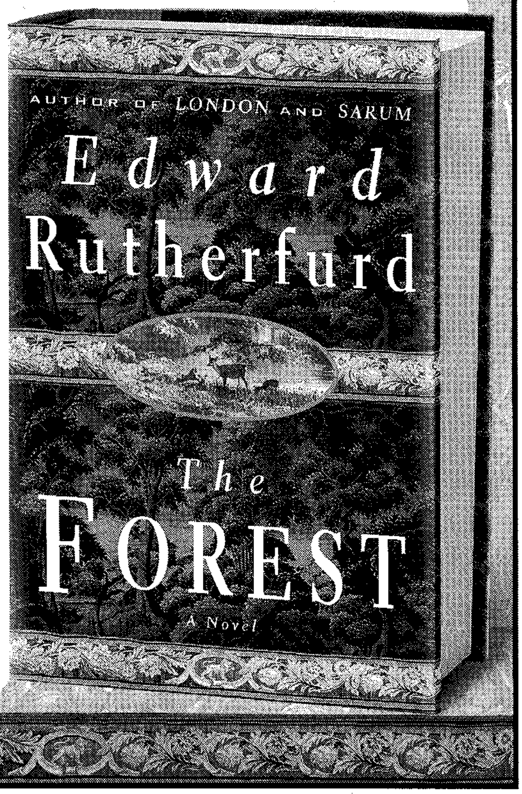

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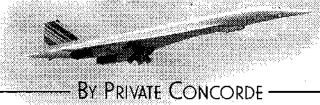

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him famous. Through May 14. (The Municipal Art Society, 457 Madison Ave., at 51st St. 935-3960.)

"HARLEM"
This clear-eyed look at the famous neighborhood includes photographs by Jules Allen, Gerald Cyrus, Ozier Muhammad, Gordon Parks, Frank Stewart, Budd Williams, and others. Through May 20. (Leica, 670 Broadway. 777-3051.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (860-1777)—**"Picturing Business: The Photography of *Fortune* Magazine."** Margaret Bourke-White got the ball rolling in *Fortune's* 1930 inaugural issue with a photo-essay on a hog-processing plant. Her elegant black-and-white, Machine Age patterns avoid outright gore, but we wind up staring down the slope of a vast mountain of pig dust. Walker Evans is the star here, not only because his rare, unpublished pictures dominate the show but because his position as special photography editor for *Fortune* allowed him to involve the likes of Robert Frank, whose bemused series on commuting fat cats was decidedly not capitalistic propaganda. Through May 14. Nathan Lyons's **"Riding First Class on the Titanic"** is on view through June 18. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)

ONLY CONNECT

YOU ARE HERE
In New York, our lives are rich in directional aids, from the colorful disks marking subway lines to the metallic-green street signs at every intersection. For most of us, orienteering—an activity in which participants venture into the woods and then proceed from point to point using nothing but a compass, topographical maps, and the surrounding landscape—probably seems like a form of medieval torture. It's not. It's a form of modern torture, a recognized competitive sport that will be celebrated with the first-ever National Orienteering Day, on May 6. Having scheduled events throughout the state and across the country, orienteering aficionados are determined to help their sport find its way to the hearts of Americans everywhere.

On-line, where the absence of reliable directions is commonplace, orienteering is, ironically, well represented. The **INTERNATIONAL ORIENTEERING FEDERATION** (www.orienteering.org) manages international schedules and rules for the sport's many variations, which include orienteering by foot (known as Foot-O), by skis (Ski-O), by mountain bike (Mountain Bike-O), and by trail (that's right: Trail-O). The home page of the **U.S. ORIENTEERING FOUNDATION** (www.us.orienteering.org) keeps a comprehensive list of this coming weekend's orienteering events, along with printable maps for negotiating everything from upstate terrain (the Point au Roche State Park, in Plattsburgh, the Fahnestock State Park, in Cold Spring, and the Chenango Valley State Park, in Chenango Forks) to western wilderness (the Hoyt Arboretum, in Portland, Oregon, and the wonderfully named Greasewood Park, in Tucson, Arizona).

Those who like the idea of orienteering so much that they want to do it all day long should visit the **NORTH AMERICAN ROGAINING CALENDAR** (florawww.eeb.uconn.edu/rogaine), a list of events related not to the science of hair regrowth but to the sport of Rogaining, an orienteering-derived team-based variation with competitions that can last up to twenty-four hours and involve night navigation. And those more comfortable playing Couch-O can click over to the official site of **THE BLAIR WITCH PROJECT** (www.blairwitch.com) to remind themselves of what can happen to outdoor explorers who are not the masters of their compasses.

—*Ben Greenman*

Short List

ROBERT BORDEAU
Houk, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 750-7070. Through June 17.

KURT KRANZ
Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292. Through June 3.

NATHAN LYONS
Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0100. Through June 3.

BING WRIGHT
Schoormans, A508 W. 26th St. 243-3159. Through May 27.

"SELF-PORTRAITS & PHOTOGRAPHERS AT WORK"
De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482. Through June 17.

See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum.

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

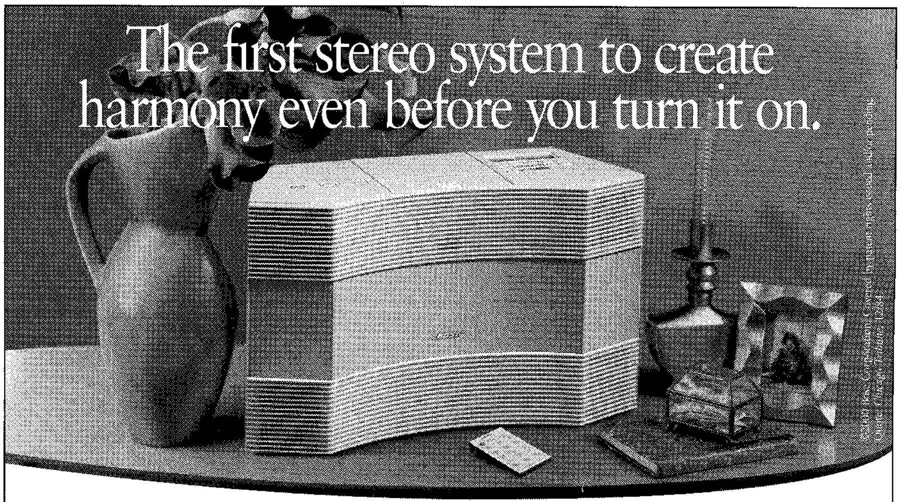
METROPOLITAN OPERA
"Giulio Cesare," by Handel, with Hei-Kyung Hong, Jennifer Larmore, Stephanie Blythe, David Daniels, and Brian Asawa; conducted by John Nelson. (May 3 at 7:30 and May 6 at noon.) ♦ **"Siegfried,"** with Jane Eaglen, Birgitta Svendén, Stig Andersen, Graham Clark, James Morris, and Richard Paul Fink; James Levine. (May 4 at 6.) ♦ **"La Bohème,"** with Nuccia Focile, Nancy Gustafson, Alfredo Portilla, and Rodney Gilfry; Plácido Domingo. (May 5 at 8.) ♦ **"Götterdämmerung,"** with Ms. Eaglen, Sondra Radvanovsky, Felicity Palmer, Mr. Andersen, Alan Held, Mr. Fink, and Eric Halfvarson; Mr. Levine. (May 6 at 6:30.) (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000.)

OPERA ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK
The demanding title role of Verdi's "Otello" is a role not wisely essayed by young tenors. That won't be a problem in this concert performance, when, for the first time in his career, Carlo Bergonzi takes on the part of the Moor—a mere month before his seventy-sixth birthday. Also in the cast are soprano Kallen Esperian and baritone Alberto Gazale. Eve Queler conducts. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 3 at 8.)

EOS ORCHESTRA
As part of their vocation, operagoers tend to develop extra quantities of *sitzfleisch* to support them in relative comfort through expansive evenings. But not all operas are marathonic: on the same evening that the Metropolitan's audience spends five and a half hours with "Siegfried," Jonathan Sheffer leads no fewer than six operas (or at least operalike musical-theatre works) that together fill far less time. On the roster are Monteverdi's "Il Combattimento de Tancredi e Clorinda," Salieri's "Kleine Harlekinade," Ernst Toch's "Egon und Emilie," Milhaud's "L'Enlèvement d'Europe," Karl Amadeus Hartmann's "Die Witwe von Ephesus," and the première of Jake Heggie's "Again. . . ." All of these operas are fully staged and presented in their original languages. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. May 4 at 8. For information about tickets, call 691-6415.)

TEATRO INSTABILE
This newly established opera company (whose name could be taken to reflect a realistic outlook on the economics of such an enterprise) offers a staging of Vivaldi's 1735 opera "La Griselda," in Italian, with English supertitles. (Riverside Church Theatre, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. 870-6784. May 7 at 3.)

NEW YORK NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE
This intrepid group presents John Eaton's "Don Quixote," an hour-long music-theatre piece in which Cervantes' hero is depicted by "acrobatic and dancing clarinettist" Jean Kopperud and Sancho Panza by flutist Jayne Rosenfeld. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. May 9-10 at 8.)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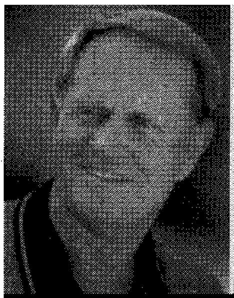

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ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
For a concert production of Sondheim's dark musical thriller "Sweeney Todd," the orchestra brings together a star from the classical-music world (baritone Bryn Terfel, in the title part) and one from Broadway (the actress and singer Patti LuPone, as Mrs. Lovett) to portray the leading roles. Also in the cast are Audra McDonald (as the Beggar Woman), Heidi Grant Murphy, John Aler, Neil Patrick Harris, Stanford Olsen, David Gaines, and Paul Plishka. Andrew Litton conducts. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. May 4 at 7 and May 5-6 at 8.)

JUPITER SYMPHONY
At Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, Jens Nygaard conducting. May 4 at 2 and 7: An all-Mozart concert, comprising "Eine Kleine Nachtmusik," the G-Major Violin Concerto (featuring Arturo Delmoni), and the G-Major Piano Concerto (K. 453, with Sara Davis Buechner). ♦ May 8 at 2 and 7 and May 9 at 8: Glinka's "Prince Kholmsky" Overture, Arensky's "Five Silhouettes," Tchaikovsky's "Pezzo Capriccioso," Liadov's "A Musical Snuffbox," and Anton Rubinstein's Piano Concerto No. 4 (with Mikhail Yanovitsky). (152 W. 66th St. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

"YADDO 100"
The upstate arts colony celebrates its centennial by hosting a concert series that highlights works by resident composers, past and present. May 4 at 8: The British pianist Stephen Hough, whose New York recital appearances are warmly anticipated but entirely too rare, performs Liszt's B-Minor Sonata, in addition to works by four Yaddo composers: Copland's Piano Variations and George Tsontakis's "Ghost Variations" (both of which were composed at the arts center), as well as the premières of David Del Tredici's "Wedding Song" and Lowell Liebermann's Three Impromptus. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050.) ♦ May 7 at 8: The conductorless Orpheus Chamber Orchestra performs David Diamond's "Rounds," Del Tredici's "Haddock's Eyes" (with soprano Hila Plittman), Daron Hagen's "Angels," and Copland's "Short Symphony." (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. For information about tickets, call 592-4156.)

LES ARTS FLORISSANTS
The French early-music ensemble performs Handel's dramatic oratorio "Theodora," with William Christie directing. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 718-636-4100. May 6 at 7:30 and May 7 at 3.)

NEW YORK COLLEGIUM
Andrew Parrot directs the chorus and period-instrument orchestra in Bach's Cantata No. 21 and his "Easter Oratorio," with soloists Emily van Evera (soprano), Barbara Holinshead (contralto), Marc Molomot (tenor), and Curtis Streetman (bass). (Church of St. Vincent Ferrer, 869 Lexington Ave. May 6 at 8. For information about tickets, call 717-9246.)

ST. GEORGE CHORAL SOCIETY AND ORCHESTRA
Kyler Brown directs Vivaldi's "Gloria" and John Rutter's "Requiem." (St. George's Church, 207 E. 16th St. 475-1463. May 7 at 4.)

RECITALS

FESTIVAL CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY
The ensemble presents Beethoven's D-Major Serenade for Flute and Strings, Mendelssohn's "Variations Concertantes" for Cello and Piano, and Brahms's G-Minor Piano Quartet. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. May 3 at 8.)

IGOR BEGELMAN
The clarinettist, assisted by pianist Tatiana Goncharova, performs Lutoslawski's "Dance Preludes" and sonatas by Brahms (his Second) and Poulenc, among other works. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. May 3 at 8. For information about tickets, call 279-4200.)

BARBARA BONNEY
The soprano, assisted by pianist Warren Jones and flutist Carol Wincenc, performs songs by André Previn, John Musto, and Copland. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 4 at 7:30.)

BARGEMUSIC
May 4-5 at 7:30: Presenting Bach's A-Major Sonata for Violin and Keyboard, Shostakovich's Piano Trio No. 1 (an early work in one movement), several songs by Shostakovich, and Brahms's Piano Quartet in A Major. ♦ May 6 at 7:30 and May 7 at 4: A program of sonatas and concertos by Vivaldi, in which violinist Mark Peskanov is featured in the "Four Seasons" concertos. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

NEW YORK PHILOMUSICA
The chamber group offers Shostakovich's String Quartet No. 11, Kodály's Intermezzo for String Trio, and Tchaikovsky's string sextet "Souvenir de Florence." (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 501-3330. May 4 at 8.)

SANFORD SYLVAN AND DAVID BREITMAN
The velvet-voiced baritone and the pianist, longtime colleagues in art-song interpretation, perform "The Glass Hammer," a major new song cycle by Jorge Martín. A compendium of fifteen poems by Andrew Hudgins, the hour-long cycle traces an incisive coming-of-age memoir of growing up in a less than perfect family. Although much of the subject matter is disturbing, Martín's score (which these performers unveiled in Connecticut, in March) captivates the listener's attention. Completing the program are Debussy's "Le Promenoir de Deux Amants" and Ravel's "Histoires Naturelles." (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 5 at 8.)

David Breitman and Sanford Sylvan perform "The Glass Hammer" at Carnegie Hall.

EDEL RODRIGUEZ

BEAUX ARTS TRIO
The ensemble performs Beethoven's Piano Trios in C Minor (Op. 1, No. 3) and B-Flat Major (Op. 97, the "Archduke"), in addition to his "Kakadu" Variations. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. May 5-6 at 8.)

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER
Pianist Yefim Bronfman performs Beethoven's Piano Variations in C Minor (WoO 80) and is joined by colleagues for Berg's "Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano" (with David Shifrin), Beethoven's F-Major Violin Sonata (the "Spring," with Cho-Liang Lin), and Berg's Chamber Concerto (with Joseph Silverstein conducting). (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. May 5 at 8 and May 7 at 5.)

RENÉE FLEMING
The soprano, assisted by André Previn at the piano, performs recent compositions by Ricky Ian Gordon, Aaron Jay Kernis, Craig Harris, and Mr. Previn. (Alice Tully Hall. May 7 at 2. 875-5050.)

VLADIMIR FELTSMAN
The pianist performs Haydn's Sonata in E-Flat Major (Hob. XVI:49), Brahms's "Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel," and a good deal of Chopin (including his Fourth Ballade). (LeFrak Concert Hall, Queens College, Flushing. 718-793-8080. May 7 at 2.)

ELYSIUM
The chamber group performs Haydn's C-Major String Quartet (Op. 54, No. 2), Mozart's Clarinet Quintet (with Stanley Drucker playing the wind part), and Schumann's Piano Quintet (with Lukas Foss as pianist). (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 8 at 8.)

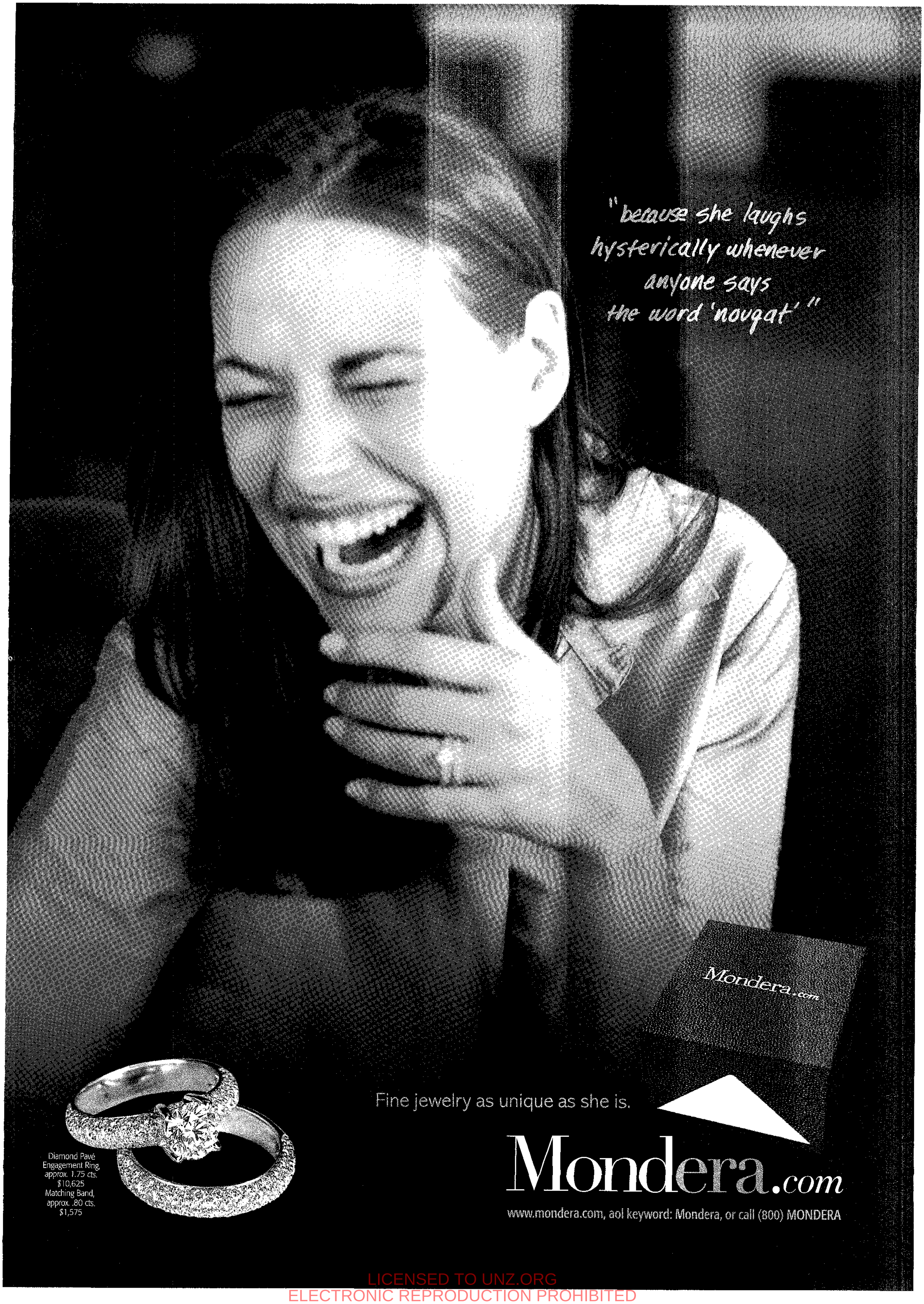
ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE NEW YORKER FESTIVAL
May 6 from 10 to 3 and May 7 from 1 to 4: *New Yorker* contributors Jeffrey Toobin, Susan Orlean, Malcolm Gladwell, Robert Mankoff, Claudia Roth Pierpont, Jerome Groopman, and John Seabrook each take a turn signing books and engaging in informal conversations at the festival's headquarters. (Pershing Square Café, 90 E. 42nd St. For more information, call 877-391-0545.) ♦ May 7 at 4: Poets John Ashbery, Eavan Boland, Deborah Garrison, Louise Glück, Galway Kinnell, Stanley Kunitz, Philip Levine, Robert Pinsky, Marie Ponsot, Charles Simic, Mark Strand, and Derek Walcott read from their work. (Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. No tickets necessary.)

MORE READINGS
May 3 at 6:30: Actors Leslie Uggams, Claire Bloom, and Paul Hecht read stories by A. S. Byatt, Penelope Lively, and John J. Clayton. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) ♦ May 4 at 7:30: *Tin House* editor Elissa Schappell reads from her novel, "Use Me." (Community Bookstore, 143 Seventh Ave., Park Slope, Brooklyn. No tickets necessary.) ♦ May 8 at 7:30: *New Yorker* poetry editor Alice Quinn joins Elizabeth Macklin, Sophie Cabot Black, and other poets for a reading from their suggestions for "First Loves," an anthology of verses that sparked their initial infatuation with metre. (K.G.B., 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

TALK
May 8 at 7: Photographer James Nachtwey discusses his work. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. For reservations, which are required, call 860-1776, ext. 156.)

WALK
May 6, starting at 7:30 A.M.: Shorewalkers, a nonprofit group dedicated to strolling the city's littoral regions, holds its fifteenth annual Great Saunter, a thirty-two-mile, rain or shine, lap of Manhattan. For more information, call 330-7686.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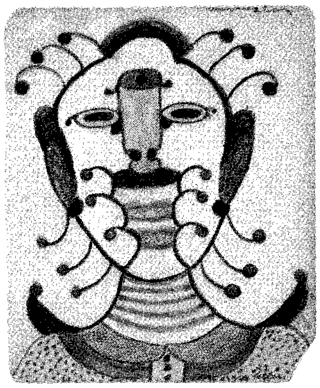

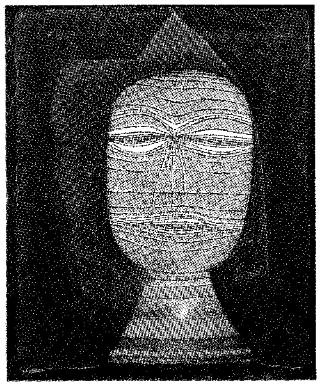

The Raw and the Cooked

When naive or folk art is brought together with avant-garde art, the results can be surprising. See work by Jean Dubuffet, Paul Klee, and more, in *The Raw and the Cooked,* along with twenty-three other unconventional exhibitions, now on view at MoMA.

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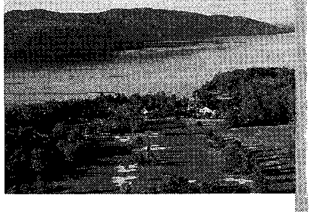
Left: Minnie Evans. Untitled (*Clown Creature*) c. 1944. Colored crayons and pencil on buff paper. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mrs. Nina Howell Starr. *Right:* Paul Klee. *Actor's Mask.* 1924. Oil on canvas mounted on board. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection. © 2000 ARS, N.Y./VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn

Made possible by The Starr Foundation. Generous support is provided by Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro in memory of Louise Reinhardt Smith. Additional support provided by the Contemporary Exhibition Fund of The Museum of Modern Art, National Endowment for the Arts, Jerry I. Speyer and Katherine G. Farley, and The Contemporary Arts Council and The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art. Education programs accompanying MoMA2000 are made possible by Paribas. Interactive environment supported by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.



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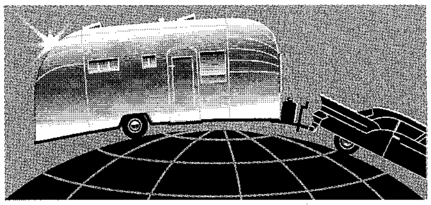


NIGEL HOLMES

On August 21, 1915, the Conklin family of Long Island set out in their twenty-five-foot, eight-ton "Gypsy Van"—a virtual house on wheels whose parlorlike interior was appointed with fine linen, silk, and carved ash. After two months on the road, the Conklins and their Gypsy Van rolled into San Francisco, pioneering the notion of the recreational vehicle and illustrating its potential for coast-to-coast travel. The Conklins' path is retraced in Roger B. White's **HOME ON THE ROAD: THE MOTOR HOME IN AMERICA** (Smithsonian), an engaging history of America's enduring fascination with R.V.s, from early custom-built "house cars" to the Merry Pranksters' Day-Glo bus to the Winnebago, the first mass-produced motor home and a perennial symbol of suburban wanderlust.

In the just-published **AIRSTREAM** (Chronicle), Bryan Burkhart and David Hunt salute another highway icon. The Airstream, a silver fuselage-inspired trailer that resembles a giant toaster on wheels, gained a devoted postwar following through the efforts of charismatic company founder Wally Byam, who led Airstream caravans around the globe; "Airstream" includes vintage photographs of these glistening land yachts parked in Red Square, at the Great Pyramids, and at Afghanistan's Arch of Bost.

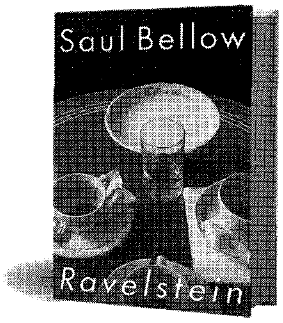
For Ron and Barb Hofmeister, owning both an R.V. and a house became redundant; in 1989, they pulled out of their driveway in a twenty-four-foot Mallard Sprinter and have been on the road ever since. **MOVIN' ON** (R&B Publications) offers a front-seat view of "the world of full-timing," complete with advice on "boondocking" (camping without a hookup) and finding a decent jazz station in North Dakota. Like millions of other Americans since the Conklins, Ron and Barb live according to a simple motto: "Home Is Where We Park It."

—*Mark Rozzo*

Books.

[AT BARNES & NOBLE]

Award-Winning Fiction by Saul Bellow



RAVELSTEIN

by Saul Bellow

This deeply moving, insightful novel centers on a brilliant professor who has lived life to its fullest. The rich and bleakly funny world of Abe Ravelstein is full of ups and downs, including a unique relationship with his best friend, Chick, based on mutual admiration and subconscious rivalry. After tragedy strikes and Ravelstein succumbs to a devastating illness, Chick writes a memoir of his friend—a requiem to love and the strong bonds of friendship. (Viking)

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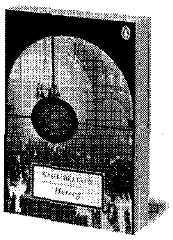
HERZOG



Although long-suffering, modern-day hero Moses Herzog has failed both personally and professionally in his life, he considers himself a survivor. Through writing unsent letters to family, friends, colleagues, and enemies, he shares his views of the world and reveals his innermost thoughts and feelings. (Penguin)

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THE ADVENTURES OF AUGIE MARCH

As a poor boy growing up in Chicago during the Great Depression, Augie March goes through a long series of unconventional occupations, in search of life's deeper meaning. His endeavors become even more outlandish after he meets a glamorous huntress, as he continues his quest for reality and fulfillment. (Penguin)

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SEIZE THE DAY

At the end of his rope both financially and emotionally, Tommy Wilhelm is on the brink of disaster. Over the course of climactic events in a single day, he examines his past mistakes and present problems as he searches to affirm his own worth and humanity. (Penguin)

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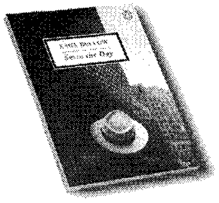

HENDERSON THE RAIN KING

Seeking a new, more rewarding life, a middle-aged American millionaire descends upon an African tribe and wins their respect and admiration with his endless passion for life and incredible physical strength. His extraordinary gift for making rain, however, is what sets him on a higher plane. (Penguin)

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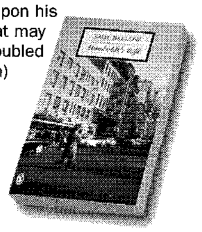
HUMBOLDT'S GIFT

Best friends for many years, gifted poet Von Humboldt Fleisher and writer Charlie Citrine suffer a long estrangement lasting until Humboldt's death. From beyond the grave, Humboldt reaches out and bestows an unexpected legacy upon his despairing friend that may help him turn his troubled life around. (Penguin)



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DIRECTOR'S MANUAL

MOVIES OPENING

ADRENALINE DRIVE
A young nurse and a rental-car clerk steal a cache of money from the yakuza, in this comedy directed by Shinobu Yaguchi. In Japanese. Opening May 5. (State.)

THE BASKET
During the Second World War, two German orphans are sent to a farming community in the Pacific Northwest, where one of them discovers he has a talent for basketball. Directed by Rich Cowan. Opening May 5.

COMING SOON
A comedy about the sexual misadventures of three Manhattan teen-age girls (Gaby Hoffman, Bonnie Root, and Tricia Vessey). With Mia Farrow, Ryan O'Neal, and Spalding Gray. Directed by Colette Burson. Opening May 5.

DREAM OF LIGHT
Reviewed below in Film Notes. Opening May 3. (Film Forum.)

I DREAMED OF AFRICA
Hugh Hudson directs this bio-pic of Kuki Gallmann (Kim Basinger), a wildlife defender in Kenya. Opening May 5.

INTO MY HEART
A young married lawyer in New York falls in love with his best friend's wife, in this drama directed by Anthony Stark and Sean Smith. Opening May 5.

GLADIATOR
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening May 5.

UP AT THE VILLA
A historical drama set in Italy in 1938, with Kristin Scott Thomas playing an English widow who gets involved with an American spy (Sean Penn). Directed by Philip Haas. Opening May 5.

FILM NOTES

If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.

AMERICAN PSYCHO
Bret Easton Ellis's infamous novel, a wicked distillation of the nineteen-eighties, has finally made it to the screen; that audiences should laugh so freely at the result is an equally telling footnote to our own times. Christian Bale plays Patrick Bateman—serial killer, Wall Street whiz, and a snob so gripped by status symbols that he hyperventilates at the sight of a business card more finely printed than his own. The director, Mary Harron, shows us little of Bateman's office life, and we need more; it's a question not just of period detail but of the vital bond between his night work and his day job—between the dismemberment of corpses and the dismantling of corporations. Yet there is much to dazzle and distress here: Harron lights and arranges her characters—especially Bateman's friends—like gleaming humanoids, as if he is not alone in yielding to forces far more potent than himself. Bale is smooth and sinister; the actresses around him—Chloë Sevigny, Cara Seymour, and Samantha Mathis—seem pale and defeated by comparison, as if they know themselves to be doomed. Apart from a spree with a chainsaw, the violence of the book has been sharply toned down, (you could hardly tone it up), and some of the killing has turned into cold, outrageous comedy, with Bateman explaining his penchant for Whitney Houston and Genesis to bemused victims. With a record collection like that, he was lucky not to get it in the neck himself.—*Anthony Lane* (4/17/00) (BAM Rose Cinemas, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, 19th Street East 6, 72nd Street East, and Village Theatre VII.)

BLACK AND WHITE
James Toback's dangerous comedy is by turns malicious and earnest as it explores relations between whites and blacks in New York's hip-hop community. Oli (Power) Grant plays a thuggish rap entrepreneur at the center of a group that includes a snarly upper-class teen-age girl (Bijou Phillips), a pathetic hanger-on (William Lee Scott), and a married couple in which the husband (Robert Downey, Jr.) is gay and the wife (Brooke Shields) is an earnest bumbler with a video camera. Toback shows interactions between the races as charged but fragmentary, and the gliding camera (David Ferrara did the cinematography) captures the momentary connections. Toback gets at the way certain whites long for danger and excitement, and how blacks who want to leave the ghetto yet remain authentic pop-culture outlaws need whites as an audience. There is much that is inept and clunky here, but at its best the movie has the caught-on-the-run quality of some of Godard's pictures from thirty-five years ago. With Mike Tyson, Knicks star Allan Houston, supermodel Claudia Schiffer, and, as a tormented New York cop, Ben Stiller. Music by Wu-Tang Clan and many others, including Dimitry Shostakovich.—*David Denby* (4/10/00) (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, and 64th and 2nd.)

CRISS CROSS
In this once underrated, now overrated 1949 film noir, everyone from Burt Lancaster's best friend (a cop) to the dame who's always nursing a drink at his favorite bar wonders why Lancaster keeps running after his slutty ex-wife, Yvonne DeCarlo, even after she hitches herself to that peerless crud Dan Duryea. But the boy can't help it. Before long he's hatched a leaky scheme to team with Duryea as the inside man on an armored-car stickup and take half the loot and, possibly, DeCarlo. The director, Robert Siodmak, expertly blends shadowy expressionistic scenes with hard-edged set pieces in real Los Angeles locations, while the screenwriter, Daniel Fuchs, gives the bit players a laconic bite. But for all of Lancaster's moony charisma, his pining gets ridiculous—especially since DeCarlo seems happiest when she's doing the rumba with Tony Curtis (in an unbilled cameo, his screen début).—*Michael Sragow* (Walter Reade Theatre; May 6.)

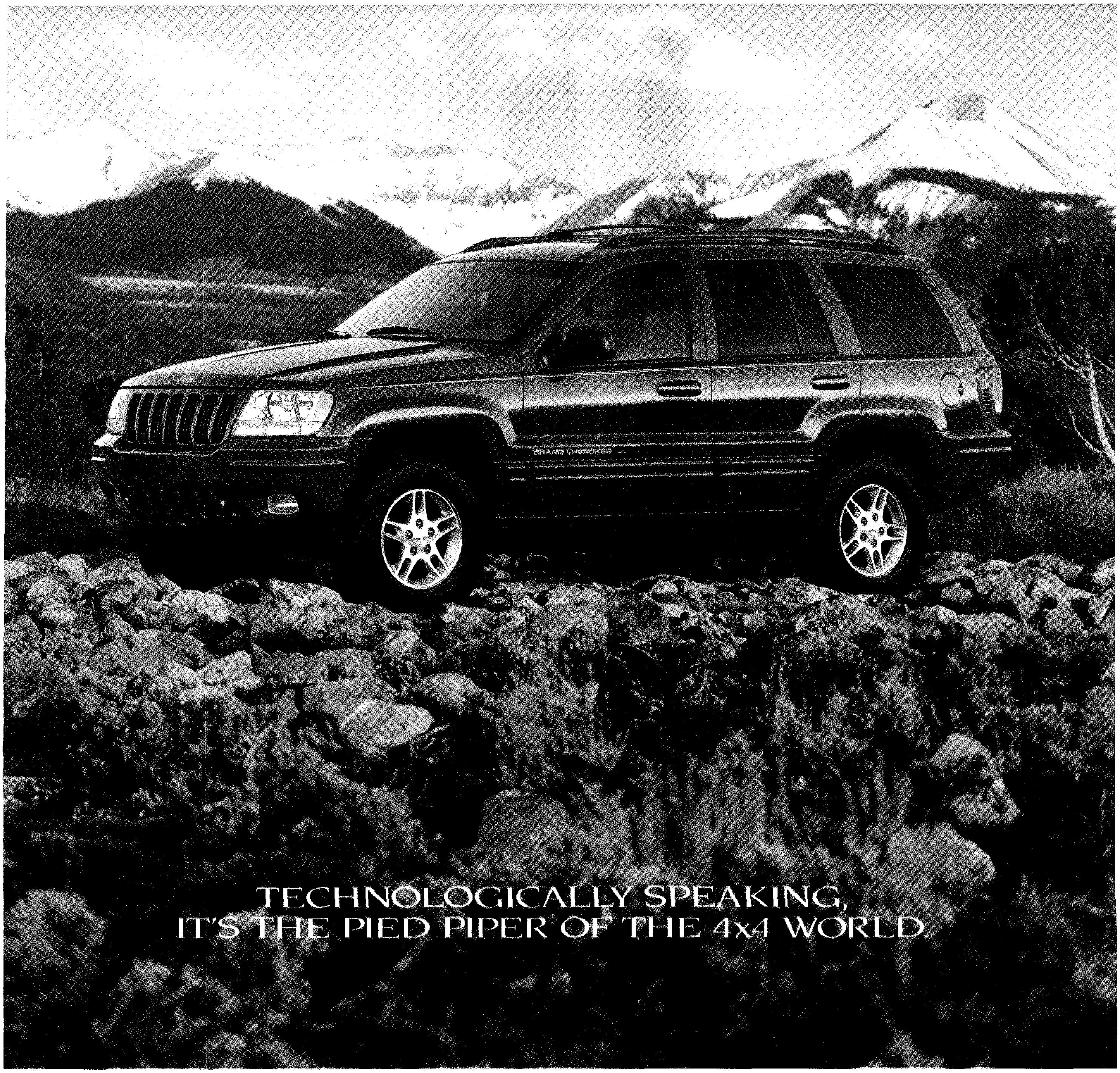
DREAM OF LIGHT
Watching this hundred-and-thirty-nine-minute documentary of the Spanish artist Antonio López painting a quince tree in his backyard requires a preternatural patience, and that's precisely the point. Víctor Erice, the director, eschews narration to present a quiet act of creation. We watch as López builds a frame, positions his easel, sets up a plumb line, peers, sketches, and paints. We hear the scrape of his pencil, the passing ambulances, the barking of the neighborhood dogs. His friends and family drop by to chat, it rains often, and autumn slowly fades. Will he finish the painting before the quinces fall? Erice shows how a painter and a filmmaker share the same concern for capturing verisimilitude, whether it be the afternoon light as it illuminates a yellow quince, or the meticulous process, over time, of painting that same quince. He editorializes slightly: there are many shots of televisions flickering in apartments at night, suggesting the meaningless riot of images his film is working against. He demands that we stare, be idle, and linger along with López. Perhaps, if you have not been corrupted by too much jump-cut wizardry, you will linger happily among these beautiful images. As for the easily distracted: consider yourself warned. In Spanish.—*Michael Agger* (Film Forum.)

EAST IS EAST
The great Indian actor Om Puri (from "My Son the Fanatic") plays George Khan, Pakistani patriarch and tyrant, husband of the stoical Englishwoman Ella (Linda Bassett) and father of seven children—an émigré who has settled in Manchester and who tries to impose traditional Islamic ways on his kids, most of whom are escaping into English popular culture as rapidly as they can. Puri has a big, handsome-ugly face, and he wears a moustache that gives his George a necessary touch of vanity. The playwright Ayub Khan-Din, who adapted his own stage success, has worked out a slangy, profane argot for him, and Puri's lingo joined to the sound of the family members ragging one another across the living room produces a fine, salty Brit tang. But "East Is East" is repetitive and tiresome: George brutalizes the children and his wife over and over; he's fairly stupid and often hateful—not ambiguous enough to be a tragic or even terribly interesting figure. Damien O'Donnell's direction too obviously betrays the material's roots in the commercial theater.—*D.D.* (4/24 & 5/1/00) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

ERIN BROCKOVICH
This upbeat, inspirational melodrama, based on a true story and directed by Steven Soderbergh, is brought to life by a star on a heavenly rampage. Julia Roberts swings into rooms, ablaze with indignation, her breasts bulging out of her skimpy tops, and rants at the people gaping at her. She's a moral heroine with no sense of propriety—Ralph Nader crossed with Jesse Ventura. Like "A Civil Action" and "The Insider," the movie exposes corporate malfeasance—in this case, that of Pacific Gas & Electric, which for years dumped a lethal chemical called chromium 6 at its plant in Hinkley, California; the families who lived nearby were diagnosed with multiple cancers. Brockovich, a legal secretary without formal training, leads the charge against the utility corporation, supported by a phlegmatic middle-aged lawyer (Albert Finney) and by her lover (Aaron Eckhart), a hippie-biker dreamboat, bearded but beerless, who takes care of Erin's children while she's out haranguing everybody. Soderbergh's direction goes straight as an arrow, and the movie, though obvious, crude, and even bullying, is raffishly enjoyable and touching.—*D.D.* (3/27/00) (42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Village Theatre VII.)

THE FILTH AND THE FURY
A new documentary about the Sex Pistols by Julien Temple, who has already made "The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle." Whether or not the band is an inexhaustible topic remains open to debate. The sight of a sullen and raw-skinned Sid Vicious sitting on a park bench and explaining how good-looking he is will not, perhaps, bear repeated viewings. The film wants Britain to be as reckless and unpredictable as its subject, but this requires a little twisting of the evidence: Britain in the mid-nineteen-seventies was bored and bungling, and, despite what Temple's riotous montage of unrest might suggest, the place was never on the verge of revolution—nothing beyond the musical, at any rate. The surviving band members (including lead singer Johnny Rotten) are filmed in silhouette, as if they were ex-criminals in the Witness Protection Program; this is known as flattery. Still, it is always diverting to watch harmlessly horrible people taking out their frustrations on one another—especially when the mask slips and they temporarily forget to be horrible. The climax of the picture is all anticlimax. Uprooted from home territory, the Sex Pistols withered in the alien soil of America. Their antics have aged badly; how odd, then, that their fistful of hits sound more essential and purgative than ever.—*A.L.* (4/3/00) (Film Forum.)

HE RAN ALL THE WAY
By far the best movie by blacklisted director John Berry (who fled to France shortly after finishing it,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then returned to America twenty-three years later to make "Claudine"), this 1951 film noir plays like a pulp cross between "Odd Man Out" and "The Desperate Hours." John Garfield, who also bought the rights to the source novel by Sam Ross, stars as an animalistic gunman on the lam; Shelley Winters co-stars as a naïve working-class gal who inadvertently allows him to turn her family's apartment into a hideout. Both the movie and Garfield's performance have an urgency that feels right for Garfield's final work before his fatal heart attack and Berry's last before his blacklisting. But Berry has always insisted that the intensity of this film simply grew out of an honest exploration of the story: the race toward death of a feral personality. Working with writers Hugo Butler, Guy Endore, and (uncredited) Dalton Trumbo, Berry turned a standard ticking-clock melodrama into an action-movie meditation on manhood. James Wong Howe did the sweaty, close-quarters cinematography.—*M.S.* (BAM Rose Cinemas; May 4.)

Opening May 3 at Film Forum, Víctor Erice's "Dream of Light."

RICCARDO VECCHIO

HIGH FIDELITY

A short, sharp movie from Stephen Frears, who may be trying to shake himself awake after the languors of his last film, "The Hi-Lo Country." The source is Nick Hornby's buoyant novel, which was set in North London, but the shift to Chicago feels easy, perhaps because difficulties with girls and a penchant for listing favorite pop songs are universal symptoms of male haplessness. John Cusack stars as Rob, who runs a ratty record store called Championship Vinyl; if anything, the records are more tightly packed in his apartment, which may be why his girlfriend Laura (Iben Hjejle) has just moved out. For most of the picture, they duck and weave, unable to decide whether to stay together; not much happens, and, like Laura, you want things to move on. Yet Frears keeps jump-starting the action with fast cuts, flashbacks, and a jolting current of loud music. (The end credits, which roll to a Stevie Wonder song, send you out on a high.) Why Frears made the film so dark and rain-drenched is something of a mystery; perhaps he was seeking a visual match for the glumness of perpetual adolescence. No love, the film ruefully suggests, will ever be as much fun as a good love song. Fortunately, Cusack and the rest of the cast—notably Jack Black, as a noxious compound of slob and snob—insist, like all good discophiles, on hearing both sides.—*A.L.* (4/3/00) (Cinema I, Criterion Center, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas.)

JOE GOULD'S SECRET

The great Ian Holm, rampaging and melancholy, plays Joe Gould, the Greenwich Village bohemian, genius, drunkard, bum, and faker whom the reporter Joseph Mitchell immortalized in two pieces written for this magazine. As Gould, Holm darts around the Village streets and bars like a water bug, displaying the largest vocal and temperamental range of his career so far. As Mitchell, Stanley Tucci, who also directed, is a proper and gracious Southern gentleman both drawn to and exasperated by the wild Gould, who claims to have written an enormous underground history of New York City. Tucci re-creates an older, more generous New York, as mellow as amber, but the heart of the picture is Gould's mysterious hold on Mitchell. Tucci, taking off from a suggestion of Mitchell's, implies that Gould's entertaining shenanigans and spectacular, self-chosen failure may have caused Mitchell to despair of his own writing. In the end, the movie sentimentalizes a baffling, even sinister, ethos of silence. Adapted by Howard A. Rodman.—*D.D.* (4/10/00) (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Village East Cinemas.)

KEEPING THE FAITH

In New York, two boyhood friends now in their thirties—a young, aggressively modernizing rabbi (Ben Stiller) and a quiet, traditional priest (Edward Norton)—fall in love with the woman (Jenna Elfman) they loved as a girl years before. The story of this romantic comedy, concocted by Norton and a college friend, Stuart Blumberg, may be movie-ish, even gimmicky, but scene by scene the film plays well, sometimes extremely well, with lots of goofy and charming detail. In particular, Jenna Elfman has a radiant glow. As a grownup, she's a tough corporate executive with an earnest and soulful side—Jean Arthur may have a successor after all. In his first directorial effort, Norton, an intense young actor, shows a flare for romantic longing and an appreciation of the landscapes and moods of Manhattan. Look for a good running joke about a trading-card series called "Heroes of the Torah"—Jews in dark hats and beards who have been placed on collectors' cards like ballplayers.—*D.D.* (4/24 & 5/1/00) (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

SPARTACUS

This may be the best-paced and most slyly entertaining of all the decadent-ancient-Rome spectacular films. It's a great big cartoon drama, directed by Stanley Kubrick, with Kirk Douglas at his most muscular as the slave gladiator Spartacus, who leads a rebellion of his fellow-slaves against the might of Rome. Spartacus makes some conscientious speeches—out of Howard Fast (who wrote the novel) by way of Dalton Trumbo (who did the screenplay)—but there's so much else going on that it's easy to brush off the moralizing. Laurence Olivier is Spartacus's antagonist, Crassus, a devious patrician who wants to rule Rome in the name of order—he is designed as a supersubtle Fascist. Crassus is a wonderfully gaudy character: he takes Tony Curtis, a young "singer of songs," as his sexual favorite, but he also has a fancy for the slave girl whom Spartacus loves—Jean Simmons. As a gladiator who is Spartacus's friend and who is forced to fight him, Woody Strode has the quietest, most elegant physical presence in the movie. Released in 1960.—*Pauline Kael* (Film Forum; May 7.)

U-571

A lovably traditional and competent submarine action movie. In 1942, an American crew with Bill Paxton as the skipper and Matthew McConaughey as the executive officer undertakes to steal an Enigma coding machine from a wounded German U-boat. Much of the plot is given over to the submarine-warfare tropes that have served movies well for sixty years: the testing of a young officer (McConaughey) in combat, the terror of life below during a depth-charge attack by a German destroyer, the single functioning torpedo that has to be aimed perfectly, and so on. But the director, Jonathan Mostow, who showed a talent for shot-by-shot continuity and suspense in his first film, "Breakdown" (1997), demonstrates even greater skill here, and one is caught up in the impossible feats, rescues, and attacks. With disciplined performances by Harvey Keitel, Jake Weber, Jon Bon Jovi, Jack Noseworthy, and many others. Screenplay by Mostow, Sam Montgomery, and David Ayer.—*D.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Waverly 1 and 2.)

WATTSTAX

In the early nineteen-seventies, at the height of the Black Power movement, with talk of Panthers in the air and a wealth of deep-soul practitioners on the airwaves, tens of thousands of inner-city residents packed the Los Angeles Coliseum for the Wattstax festival. Mel Stuart's documentary of this August 1972 concert is split three ways among expressive scenes of urban life, interviews with concertgoers, and performance footage. The performances, oddly, are the weak link: while acts like Isaac Hayes and the Staple Singers justify their reputations, a host of lesser gospel and R. & B. acts are interchangeable and somewhat bland, and they keep the film from rising to the level of its contemporaries, especially the pair of Pennebaker films that persist as definitive documents of sixties music ("Don't Look Back," and "Monterey Pop"). Elsewhere, "Wattstax" is stronger. Local color reveals both the exuberant hope (especially in the dress, a parade of wild seventies styles) and the growing disappointment (in the legacy of the riots and the burned-out downtown) of the community. But the interviews are the real revelation: the subjects, mostly young men, speak candidly about their experience of racism, both on a broad social scale and on a personal level. And Richard Pryor, acting as a kind of narrator, binds the whole project together with a series of incandescent monologues.—*Ben Greenman* (The Screening Room.)

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ALSO PLAYING

THE BIG KAHUNA
Lincoln Square and Union Square.
COMMITTED
Angelika Film Center and Empire 25.
EAST-WEST
Paris.
FREQUENCY
Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, East 86th Street, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Union Square.
THE IDIOTS
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.
THE LAST SEPTEMBER
Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Square.
TIME CODE
Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Square.
THE VIRGIN SUICIDES
Chelsea Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.
WHERE THE HEART IS
East 86th Street, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Union Square.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

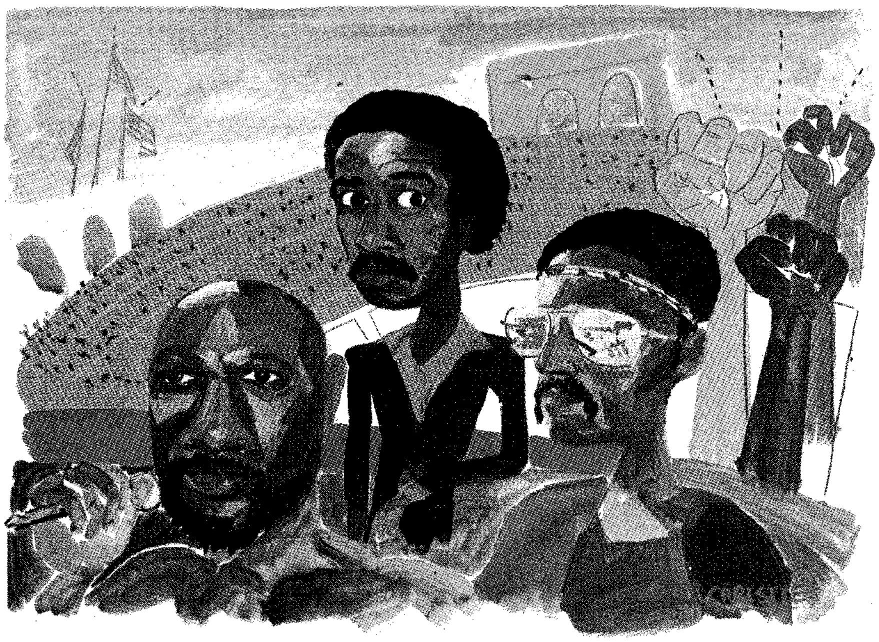
Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—A retrospective of women filmmakers from the silent-film era. May 6 at 2: "Mabel Normand Shorts I." ♦ May 6 at 4: "Mickey" (1918, Richard Jones). ♦ May 7 at 2: "Mabel Normand Shorts II." ♦ May 7 at 4:30: "The Plastic Age" (1925, Wesley Ruggles).
ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—A Michael Almereyda retrospective. May 4 and May 6 at 7: "Twister" (1988). ♦ May 4 at 9 and May 6 at 5: "Rocking Horse Winner" (1997) and "At Sundance" (1995). ♦ May 5 at 7 and May 7 at 5: "Rocking Horse Winner" (1997) and "Another Girl, Another Planet" (1992). ♦ May 5-6 at 9: "Nadja" (1994). ♦ May 7 at 7: "Hamlet" (2000), introduced by the director and Ethan Hawke.
BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770)—All show times are at 4:30, 7, and 9:30 unless otherwise noted. May 3 at 7, and 9:30: "Experiment in Terror" (1962, Blake Edwards). ♦ May 4: "He Ran All the Way" (†). ♦ May 5: "Death of a Bureaucrat" (1966, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea; in Spanish). ♦ May 6 at 2, 5:20, and 8: "The Falls" (1980, Peter Greenaway). ♦ May 7 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Alice's Restaurant" (1969, Arthur Penn). ♦ May 8: "Arthur Rimbaud: A Biography" (1991, Richard Dindo). ♦ May 9: "Le Samouraï" (1967, Jean-Pierre Melville; in French).
FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—A Stanley Kubrick retrospective. May 3-4 at 1, 3:20, 5:40, 8, and 10:20: "Full Metal Jacket" (1987). ♦ May 5 at 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, and 9:30: "The Shining" (1980). ♦ May 6 at 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, and 9:30: "2001: A Space Odyssey" (1968). ♦ May 7 at 1, 4:40, and 8:20: "Spartacus" (†). ♦ May 9 at 1:10, 4, 7:05, and 10: "The Killing" (1956). ♦ May 9 at 2:40, 5:40, and 8:40: "Killer's Kiss" (1955). ♦ The films of Clara Bow. May 8 at 1, 4:10, and 7:20: "Kid Boots" (1926, Frank Tuttle). ♦ May 8 at 2:50, 6, and 9:20: "The Saturday Night Kid" (1929, Edward Sutherland).
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of postwar Italian cinema. All films in Italian. May 4 at 2:30: "Il Camorrista" (1986, Giuseppe Tornatore). ♦ May 4 at 6 and May 6 at 2: "Fists in the Pocket" (1965, Marco Bellocchio). ♦ May 5 at 2:30 and May 7 at 5: "The Bird with the Crystal Plumage" (1970, Dario Argento). ♦ May 5 at 6 and May 6 at 5: "Le Tentazioni del Dottor Antonio" (1962, Federico Fellini) and "Il Funeralino" (1954, Vittorio De Sica). ♦ May 5 at 8:15 and May 7 at 2: "Banditi a Orgosolo" (1960, Vittorio De Seta). ♦ May 8 at 2:30: "I Giorni Contati" (1962, Elio Petri). ♦ May 9 at 2:30: "Infanzia . . ." (1969, Luigi Comencini). ♦ May 9 at 6: "Noi Tre" (1984, Pupi Avati).
MUSEUM OF TELEVISION AND RADIO
25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through May 21, a documentary-television festival. May 3 at 6: A preview of Ken Burns's new series, "Jazz." ♦ May 5 at 6: "American Masters: Ella Fitzgerald." ♦ May 6 at 2 and May 7 at 12:15: "The Green Monster," the story of jet-car designer Art Arfons. ♦ May 6 at 4:30: "On the Ropes," a portrait of three boxers in Bedford-Stuyvesant. ♦ A tribute to telejournalist Jon Alpert. May 4 at 8: "A Cinderella Season: The Lady Vols Fight Back." ♦ May 7 at 2: "Third Avenue: Only the Strong Survive." ♦ May 7 at 3: "Hard Metals Disease."
WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through May 4: "Blame Canada!," classic and contemporary Canadian films. May 3 at 1: "Isabel" (1968, Paul Almond). ♦ May 4 at 1: "Crash" (1997, David Cronenberg). ♦ May 4 at 3:10: "Calendar" (1993, Atom Egoyan). ♦ May 3 at 8: "New Super 8 New York," a compilation of 8-mm. films. ♦ A celebration of Burt Lancaster. May 5 at 1 and 8 and May 6 at 6: "The Leopard" (1963, Luchino Visconti; in Italian). ♦ May 5 at 4:45, May 7 at 7:05, and May 9 at 1: "The Killers" (1946, Robert Siodmak). ♦ May 6 at 4 and 9:45: "Criss Cross" (†). ♦ May 7 at 5 and 9:10 and May 8 at 3:05 and 7:15: "Atlantic City" (1980, Louis Malle). ♦ May 8 at 1, 5:10, and 9:20: "The Crimson Pirate" (1952, Siodmak). ♦ May 9 at 3:15: "The Apache" (1954, Robert Aldrich).
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—Film and video selections from the 2000 Whitney Biennial. Highlights listed here. Tuesdays at noon: "Driver 23" (1998, Rolf Belgum). ♦ Wednesdays at 3: "Okay Bye-Bye" (1998, Rebecca Baron). ♦ Thursdays at 6:10: "Gummo" (1998, Harmony Korine). ♦ Fridays at noon: "Alma" (1998, Ruth Leitman). ♦ Saturdays at noon: "Spectres of the Spectrum" (1999, Craig Baldwin). ♦ Saturdays at 3: "Instrument" (1999, Jem Cohen with Fugazi). ♦ Sundays at 3: "Fast, Cheap, & Out of Control" (1997, Errol Morris).



Isaac Hayes, Richard Pryor, and Melvin Van Peebles in "Wattstax."

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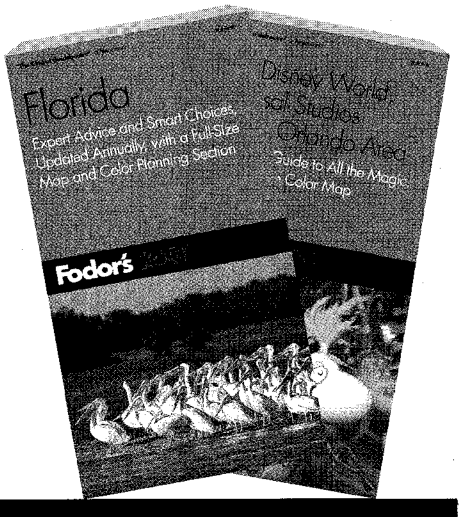
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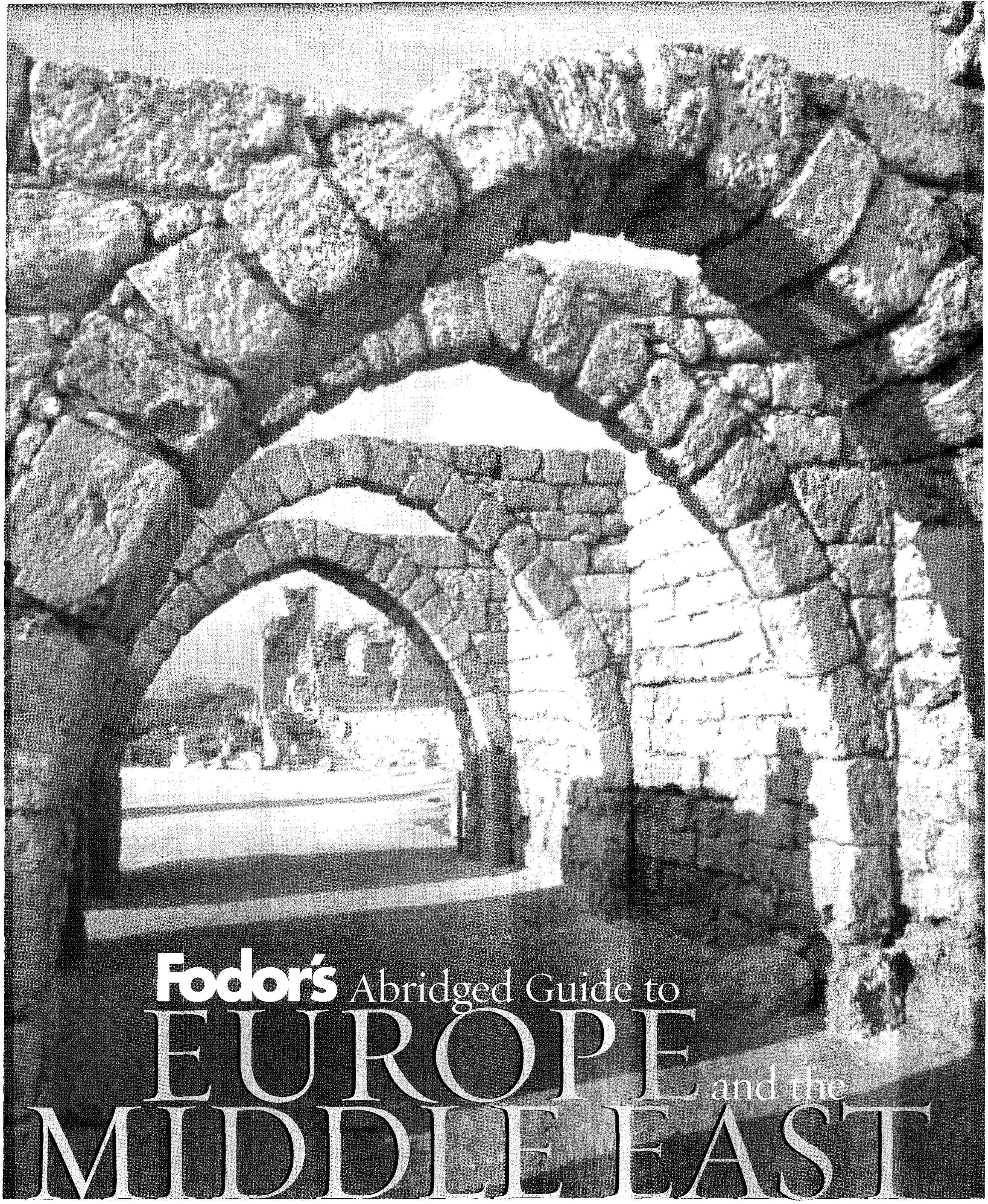
Disney World
Orlando Area
Guide to All the Magic
Color Map

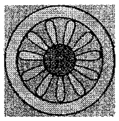


Fodor's Abridged Guide to EUROPE and the MIDDLE EAST

There's no law that says you need at least two weeks to enjoy the enrichments of travel to far-off places; certainly much ground can be covered in a long weekend. Here Fodor's editors meet the challenge of compressing a visit to some of the world's most intriguing capitals into a mere four days.

SPAIN

Handicrafts Haven

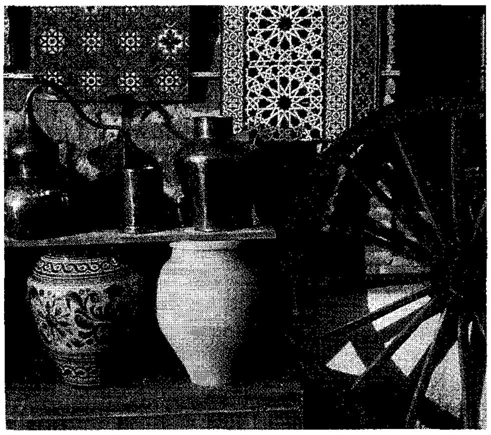


Spain has played a vital historical role as a crossroads of culture and it has attracted acclaim for handicrafts that have been exported throughout the world. Nearly all of the seventeen regions of the country—the third largest in Europe—boast artisans plying trades steeped in tradition.

Pottery from the province of Toledo and the region of Galicia is internationally renowned, while ceramic tiles from Seville, Granada, and Valencia have been held in high esteem since the Middle Ages. Tooled leather from the city of Cordoba in Andalusia has such a long-standing reputation that it has come to be known as cordovan.

Ornate embroidery, a legacy of the Spanish Moors, is an art form that has developed into a range of styles that include *blondas* lace from Almagro (Ciudad Real) and *puntillas* lacework from Camariñas (Galicia). Fine crystal is made at La Granja glassworks in Segovia, while exquisite woodwork (including furniture and hand-carved religious pieces) is fashioned on the Levant coast and in Castile. Toledo serves as the hub for damascene (metal inlaid with gold thread), as well as steel fashioned into swords and knives.

For those inclined to stay close to the country's capital, Madrid has plenty to offer. Much of Spain's handiwork—whether it's ceramics from the Manises school or guitars from José Ramirez—can be found in Madrid's wealth of upscale stores, specialty shops, and handicraft showcases.



courtesy of the Tourist Office of Spain

GETTING TO KNOW IRREPRESSIBLE MADRID

Madrid, the capital of Spain, is a compact city and most noteworthy attractions are accessible by strolling. Walk through the city's history—from the twisting alleys of medieval Madrid to the noisy outdoor cafés and bustling tapas bars where Madrileños socialize long into the night.

On day one, head for Paseo del Prado, Madrid's museum mile, where there are more masterpieces per square foot than anywhere else in the world. Go to the Prado Museum, which houses seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth-century paintings by such Spanish masters as Goya, El Greco, and Velázquez. Then visit the nearby Jardín Botánico (botanical garden) to enjoy Madrid's famed deep blue skies while observing an array of plants, flowers, and cacti from around the world. Also, visit the revered Fuente de la Cibeles, a fountain which depicts the nature goddess driving a chariot pulled by lions. Spend your second day on museum row at Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, which features modern art by Dalí, Miró, and Picasso, including the latter's masterworks, "Woman in Blue" and "Guernica." Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza has Impressionist and German Expressionist collections; and the Museo del Ejército is an army museum guaranteed to be a real treat for armor buffs.

On day three, start off at Palacio Real with its regal displays of Spanish art, architecture, and history; then take a breather at Campo del Moro with its clusters of shade trees and winding paths. Relax at an outdoor café on Plaza Mayor, then enter the narrow streets of the medieval city, taking in the eighth-century Arab Wall; San Nicolás de Servitas church, whose tower was one of the earliest structures built in Madrid; and Las Cuevas de Luis Candelas, one of the oldest taverns in the capital.

Venture into the nearby Guadarrama Mountains on your fourth day to see the granite Royal Monastery of San Lorenzo de El in El Escorial and, a few miles away, Franco's tomb, Valle de los Caídos.

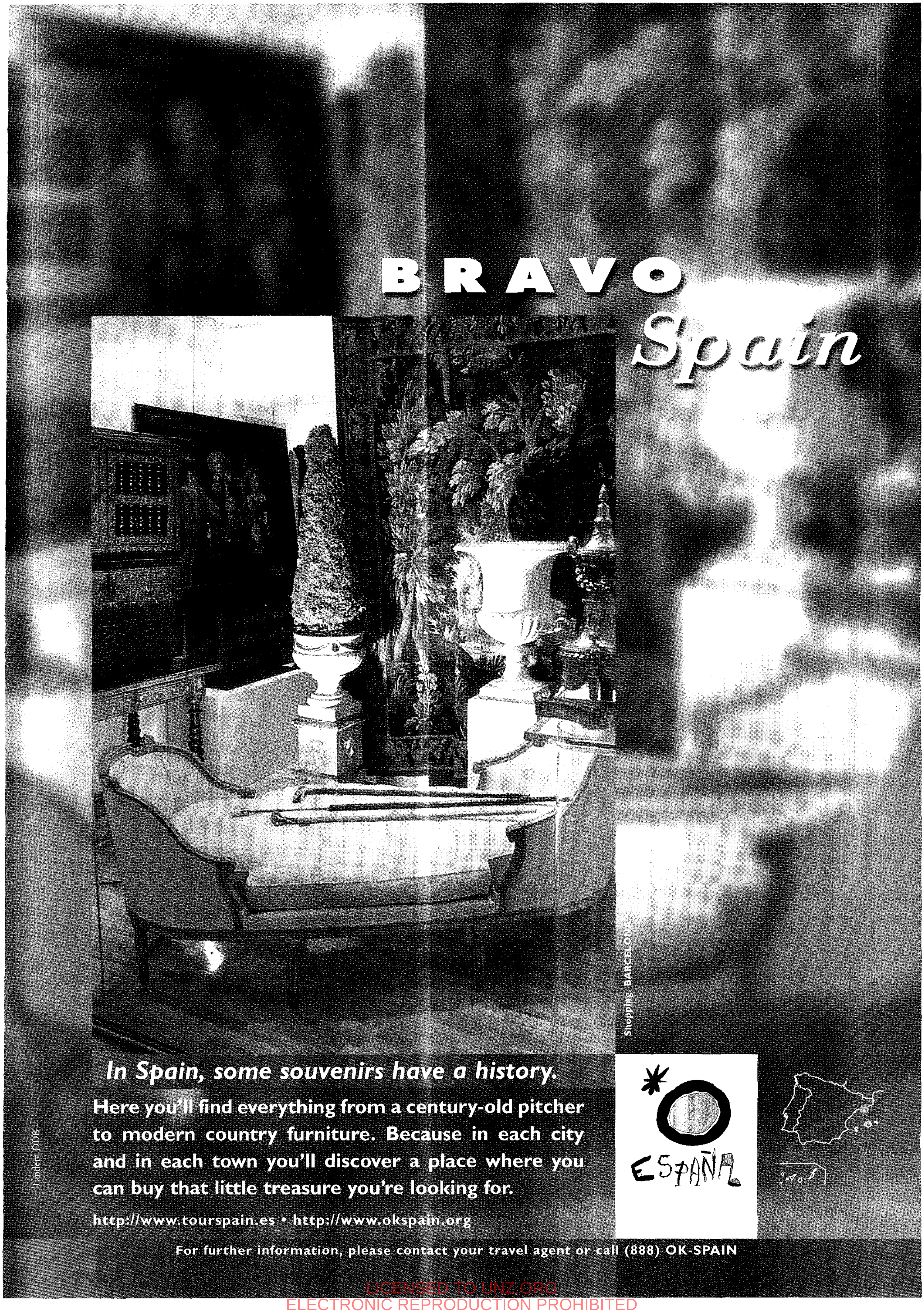
Throughout your stay in Madrid, be sure to fit in a brief siesta. That's what it takes to keep up with the Madrileños, who seem never to sleep at all. The nightlife—or *la marcha*, as the Spanish fondly call it—reaches legendary heights in this glamorous city.

Paseo del Prado ©James Strachan/Stone

Madrid's Plaza Mayor ©Shunsuke Yamamoto/Photonica

Text adapted from Fodor's Travel Publications

Cover: Entrance to Caesarea ©Richard T. Nowitz/Corbis



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ESPAÑA

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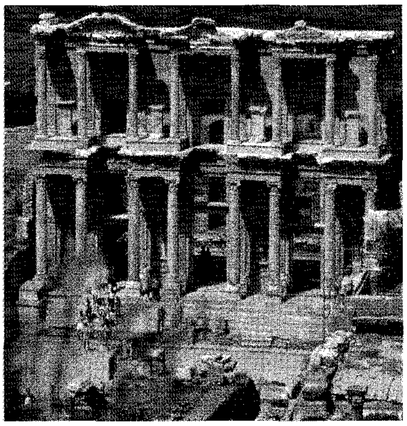
The Cosmopolitan Pulse of TURKEY

Located at the crossroads of two continents, Istanbul is the former capital of three successive empires—Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman. Though its name has changed from Constantinople to Byzantium to Istanbul, it remains the cosmopolitan heartbeat of Turkey.

Istanbul is one of the most compelling destinations for exploring antiquity—whether it's visiting Byzantine churches and Ottoman mosques, or becoming acquainted with artifacts from such ancient cultures as the Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Sumerians. Istanbul can also be used as a convenient base for visiting archeological sites in the Anatolian countryside, most notably the spectacular ruins of Ephesus. But Istanbul is more than a living museum housing some of the world's great treasures: It's also a hub of contemporary cultural activities.

Opera, theatre, and ballet flourish in Istanbul, and concerts of all musical styles take place year-round. Istanbul hosts the prestigious International Istanbul Film Festival in April and the equally esteemed International Istanbul Theater Festival in May. From June 7–July 1, the International Istanbul Music Festival will take place at several venues throughout the city and feature world-class pop, rock, and classical performers. A week later, from July 8–18, Istanbul will be transformed when the crème de la crème of the bop-to-fusion world takes the stage at the fifth annual International Jazz Festival.


Celsus Library, Ephesus/courtesy of the Turkish Ministry of Tourism

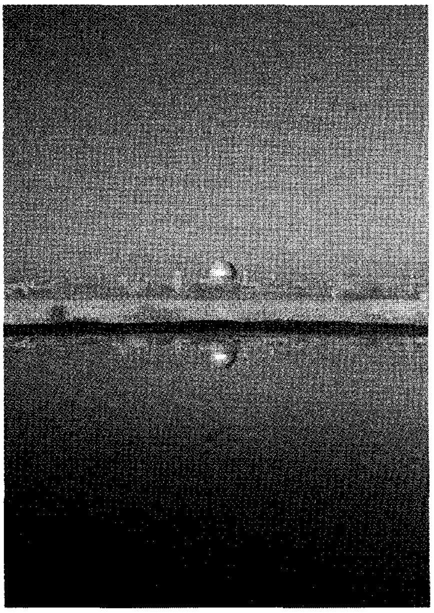
Heroes' Square in Budapest ©David Hanson/Stone

. . . MAGYAR SOUL

Hungary's elegant cities offer breathtaking grandeur, while its distinctive small towns charm with cobblestone streets winding past lovely baroque buildings. In the countryside, sunflowers blanket the gently swelling hills, and thatched-roof cottages cluster around carefully tended vineyards. Hearty meals are spiced with rich red paprika and the generosity and warmth of the Magyar soul. Visitors to Hungary are sustained by its beauty and vital spirit.

Spend two full days exploring the thriving cultural life of Budapest. On Varhegy (Castle Hill) you'll find the merry cluster of white towers that make up Fisherman's Bastion overlooking the Danube (medieval fishwives once peddled their wares at this site). Wander through the cultural center and museum complex housed in the Royal Palace here on the hill, and the magnificent gothic Matyas Church, where the last two kings of Hungary were coronated. Your second day will be well spent with a stroll on the *korszó*, a promenade along the banks of the Danube, and a glimpse of the impressive resources at the Országház national library in the Parliament. A visit to Heroes' Square (Budapest's answer to Berlin's Brandenburg Gate) can be followed by a dip in the vast Széchenyi Baths, a hearty meal in downtown Pest, and a night of music at the Operaház.

On your third day, motor or take a scenic boat trip past bare volcanic mountains and limestone hills to the villages of Szentendre and Visegrád, the crown jewels of the Danube Bend. Return to Budapest for the night and head out the next morning for a day on the Great Plain, where you can stroll in lovely Kecskemét with its elegant landmark buildings, fascinating museums, and welcoming people. Then venture out to the prairie in the Bugac National Park to watch equestrian stunts by Hungary's legendary cowboys. Bid adieu, and return to Budapest, vowing you'll be back to explore the summertime playground of Lake Balaton and the delights of the nature preserve Badacsony.


Dome of the Rock ©Neil Beer/Corbis

...VIBRANT JERUSALEM

Israel is a land of pastel landscapes that stand in stark contrast to the drama of its past and the passion of its people. Here, the present wraps its mantle around the past, particularly in Jerusalem. You'll be struck by both its beauty and its spiritual quality.

Begin your visit in Jerusalem with a view from the Mount of Olives; then explore the City of David, the archeological remains of original Jerusalem. Cab around to the Jaffa Gate to visit the Tower of David Museum. (Try to catch the morning tour which covers the action-packed history of Jerusalem.) Eat lunch at one of the Middle Eastern restaurants just inside the Jaffa Gate and follow the Ramparts Walk to a cluster of sights both Christian and Jewish atop Mt. Zion. Visit the Jewish Quarter, ending the day there or at the Western "Wailing" Wall (especially if it's Friday night). On the

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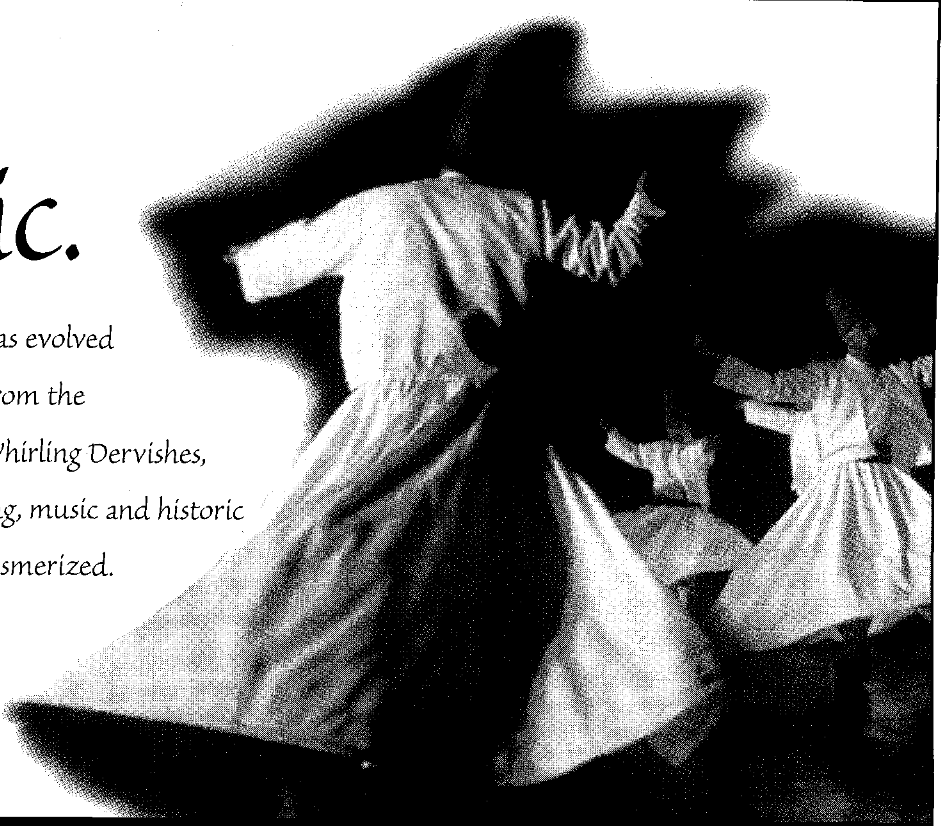
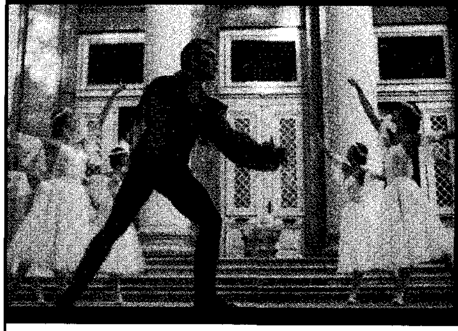


Hypnotic.

For 10 millennia, Turkey has evolved rich in cultural diversity. From the hypnotic qualities of the Whirling Dervishes, to opera, ballet, folk dancing, music and historic sites, you will be totally mesmerized. And never get sleepy.



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OPERA

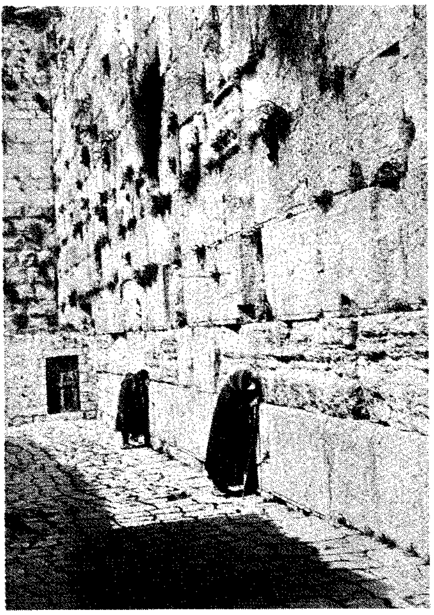
Al Fresco

Opera buffs who prefer their arias al fresco will have an unparalleled opportunity this summer when the International Opera Festival makes its debut in Caesarea's open-air Roman theatre. Located on Israel's Mediterranean shore, Caesarea was once a major Roman city. The outdoor amphitheatre, built two thousand years ago, has hosted world-class concerts and performances. The festival, the first of its kind in Israel, will take place June 10–24 and feature Puccini's "Turandot" and Richard Strauss's "Elektra."

In addition, the festival will present a special symphonic concert, "From Verdi to Duke Ellington" on June 21st, featuring highly esteemed American soprano Jessye Norman. She will be accompanied by the Israeli Symphony Orchestra Rishon LeZion conducted by Asher Fisch, music director of the Tel Aviv-based New Israeli Opera. Other presentations include chamber music concerts at sunset (preceding the evening opera productions) and a special liturgical music performance conducted by Israeli maestro Gary Bertini.

In preparation for the first annual International Opera Festival, the amphitheatre is being outfitted with a new acoustical system to insure strong sonics for every seat in the house.

Caesarea Harbor ©Richard T. Nowitz/Corbis



Wailing Wall ©Michael Maslen/Corbis

(Jerusalem continued)

second day, plunge back into the Old City for a closer look at the Western Wall and the Muslim shrines on the Temple Mount. Stroll through the bazaars, and along the Via Dolorosa to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, before having lunch at the Israel Museum. If you're a museum enthusiast, the collections will fill your whole afternoon. If not, be sure to see the Dead Sea Scrolls, and then head downtown to Ben Yehuda Street for coffee and serious people-watching.

Begin the third day at Yad Vashem, the national holocaust memorial and museum. Then, visit the stained-glass Chagall windows at Hadassah Hospital. Have a leisurely lunch in the picturesque village of Ein Kerem just outside the city. Afterwards, take a look at the Church of the Visitation. Use the rest of the afternoon to luxuriate at your hotel pool. For the fourth day, drive or book a full day with a tour company or private guide to visit the Dead Sea and Masada, a mountain where the Jewish revolt against the Romans ended in tragedy in 73 A.D. Return to Jerusalem for a delicious dinner of broiled Mediterranean daurade with couscous, followed by a sorbet of fresh pomegranites.

. . . ISTANBUL,

A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS

Day or night, Istanbul is a city with a multiple personality. At dawn, while a few hearty revelers are still making their way home from the nightclubs, the muezzin's call to prayer rebounds from ancient minarets, and residents kneel on their prayer rugs, facing Mecca. As the city emerges from slumber, donkey-drawn carts begin to vie for dominance with old Chevrolets and shiny BMWs on the noisy, narrow streets. Traditional stalls in the seductive bazaar hawking collectibles compete with Western-style boutiques; their wares may be modern, but the song of the shopkeeper and the ritual bargaining are as old as the city itself.

Get your visit off to a spiritual start with The Basilica of Hagia Sophia (Church of the Holy Wisdom), perhaps the greatest work of Byzantine mosaics ever created. Then plunge below street level to the Basilica Cistern, an impressive sanctuary where you can glimpse the underground network of waterways said to have been built by Justinian the Great. End your afternoon by heading for the four

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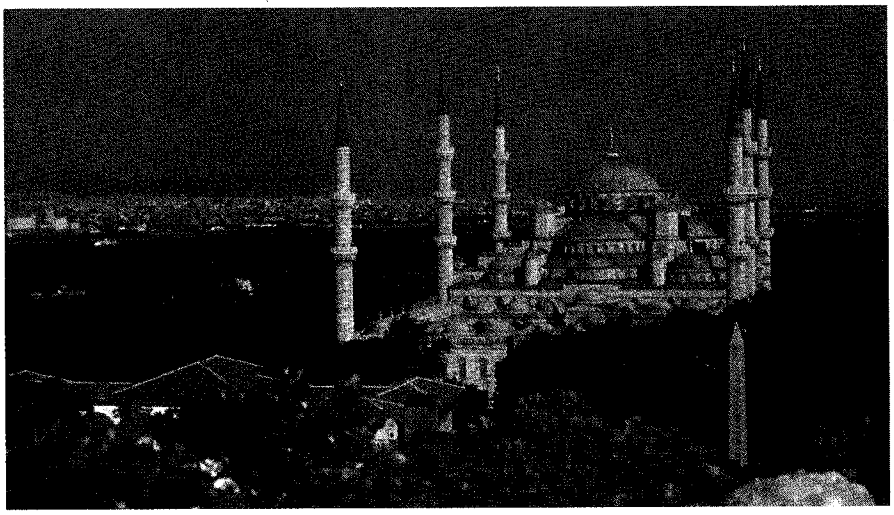
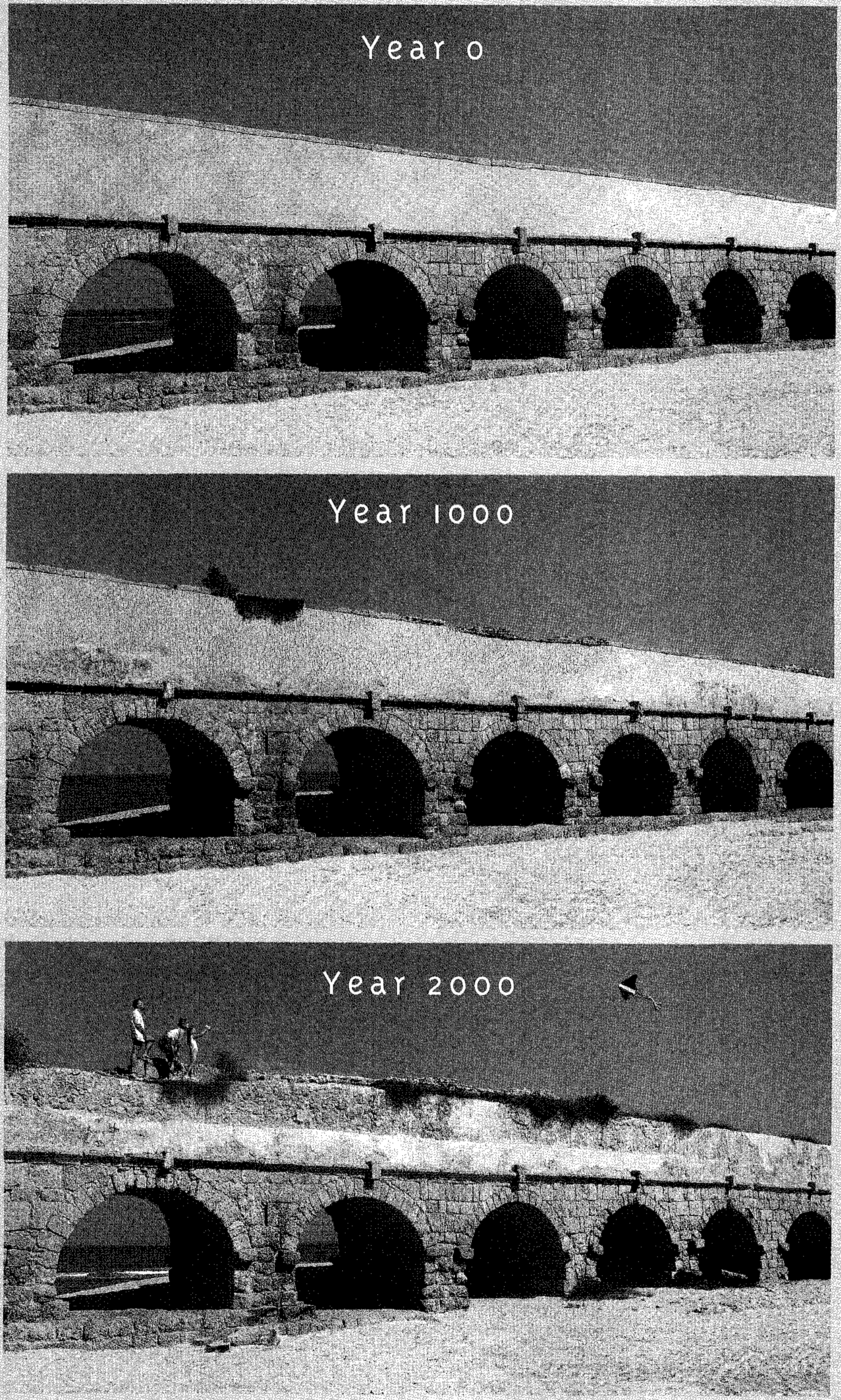


Istanbul's Blue Mosque/courtesy of the Turkish Ministry of Tourism

Come to the land where time began.



Caesarea on the Mediterranean.

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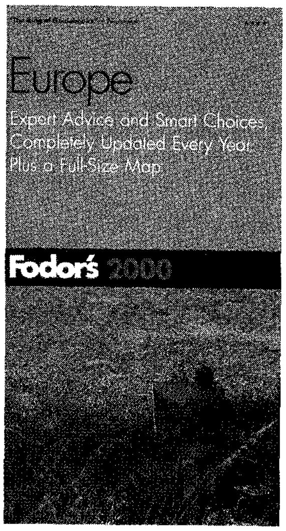
Fodor's SMART TIPS

Fodor's understands that travellers need much more than a collection of sights, hotels, and restaurants to have a great trip. That's why Fodor's developed smart travel tools to help vacationers plan the ideal sojourn. The Smart Travel Tips A to Z section of Fodor's Gold Guides gives hundreds of savvy tips that range from how to rent an apartment in a foreign country to mastering its rules of the road. The Fodor's Choice section showcases its editor's top picks so you don't miss out on any extraordinary experiences. And Great Itineraries lays out trip options geared towards a travellers' specific interests and available time. No matter what your budget or druthers are, Fodor's Gold Guides will help you plan the perfect trip.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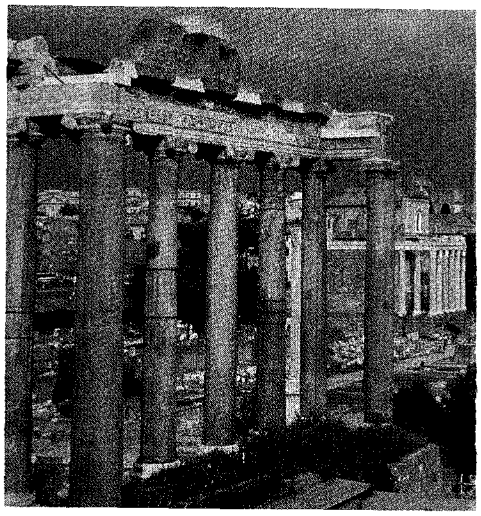
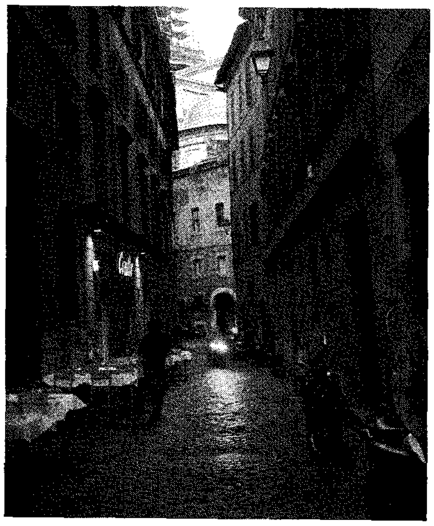


The Roman Forum ©Stephen Studd/Stone

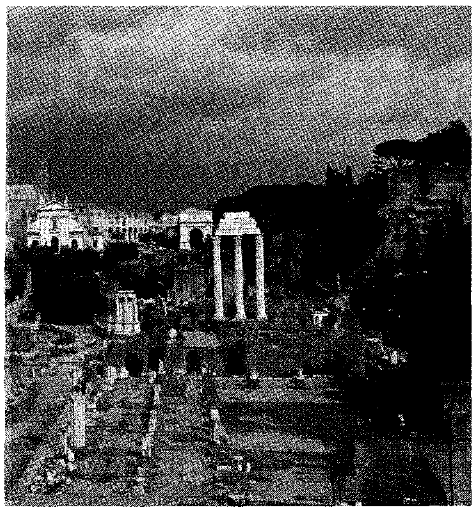


Via de Corallo ©Simon Watson/Stone

(Istanbul continued)

thousand shops of the Grand Bazaar to bargain for carpets, copperware, leather goods, jewelry, and much more. Reserve the next morning for Topkapi Sarayi, the palace that was the nexus of the Ottoman Empire for more than four hundred years. You'll be tempted to spend days here, but try to confine yourself to the Treasure Room, the Harem, and the Porcelain Collection. After a late lunch at one of the many restaurants lining Divan Yolu in Almdar, visit the fine collection of Greek and Roman antiquities at the Arkeoloji Museum.

Begin your third day by dazzling your senses with the twenty thousand shimmering blue Iznik tiles and the two hundred and sixty stained-glass windows found in the Blue Mosque. Afterwards, head to the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts to complete your daily dose of antiquities. End the day by cabbing over the Galata Bridge to take in



the magnificent views from the top of the Galata Tower as the sun sinks on the Old World.

After three days of stunning museums, palaces, and bazaars, enjoy the bucolic side of Istanbul with a day cruise up the Bosporus. Here you'll see wooded hills, old-fashioned villages large and small, and the old wooden summer homes called *yahs* that were built in the Ottoman era for the city's wealthiest. End your stay in Istanbul with a stroll through Gulhane Park as you head for the Byzantine Hippodrome stadium before dinner.

. . . ROME,
LA BELLA CITTÀ

In no other city will you find such a heady blend of elegance, earthiness, and energy as in Rome. Classical ruins and extravagant baroque churches and piazzas are everywhere. Rome's artistic masterpieces and arresting architecture evoke the legendary past—emperors outdoing their predecessors in erecting grand edifices, powerful prelates enmeshed in intricate scandals, Prince Machiavelli outwitting the rivals of Caesar Borgia.

Set the stage with a magnificent overview of Rome from the Campidoglio atop the Colle Capitolino. Then walk where the Caesars walked at the Foro Romano, and listen for the faint echoes of gladiators at the Colosseo. In the afternoon, combine sightseeing and shopping in the neighborhood around the Spanish Steps.

Fast-forward to Renaissance Rome on day two as you revel in the vibrancy of the

(continued)

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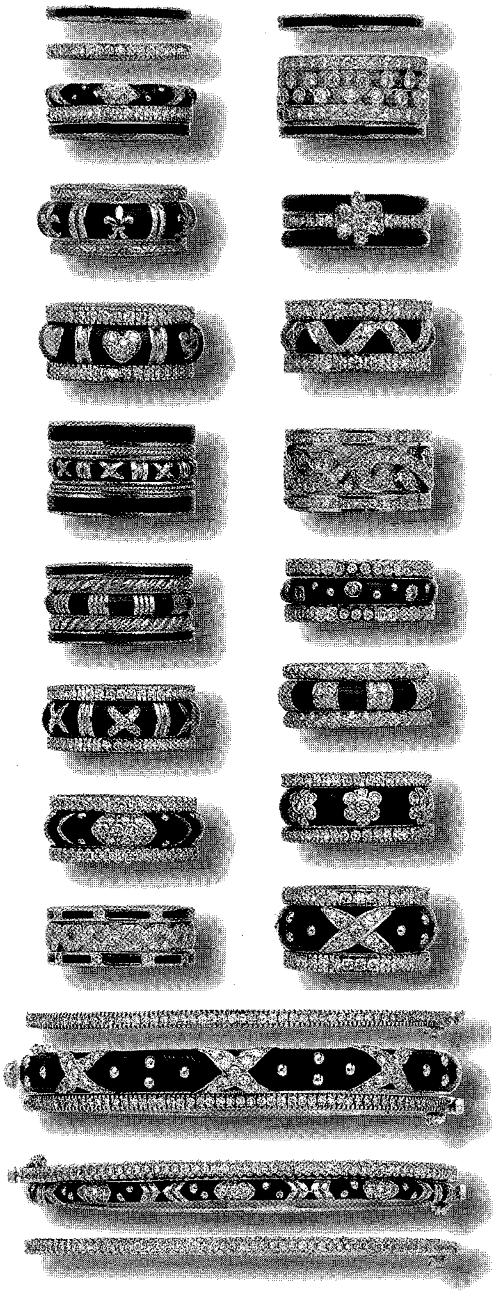

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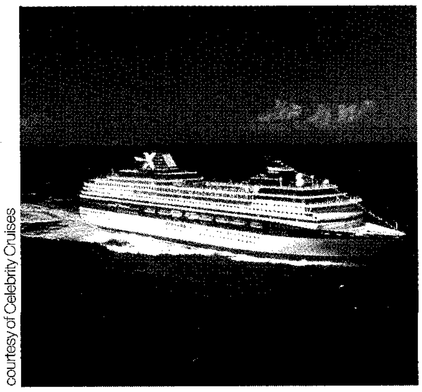
European
SEA CRUISE

Since launching its first ship only a decade ago, Celebrity Cruises has quickly become an industry leader that provides five-star amenities on state-of-the-art ships. In June the premium cruise line will augment its five-ship fleet with the Millennium—the first of four 1,950-passenger luxury liners the company will be introducing over the next three years.

The Millennium will make its maiden voyage on June 17th when it embarks from Amsterdam on the round-trip, fourteen-night, Russia and the Beauty of the Baltic excursion. The itinerary includes Baltic Ocean ports of call in Oslo, Helsinki, and the Russian city of St. Petersburg, as well as the northern European cities of Stockholm, Berlin, and Copenhagen. Departure dates this summer include July 1st, 15th, 29th, and August 12th and 26th.

Through October, Celebrity offers three other European itineraries on the Millennium: a thirteen-night Highlights of Europe cruise that departs from Amsterdam and concludes in Genoa, Italy with stopovers in Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy; an eleven-night Eastern European cruise based in Genoa with visits to Malta, Greece, Crete, and Turkey; and a ten-night, Genoa-based Western Mediterranean cruise that voyages to Barcelona and Naples.

In addition to onboard luxury and white-glove service, Celebrity Cruises offers elegant cruise packages, including Sea and Stay accommodations at first-class hotels in Amsterdam and Italy, a four-day exploration of Italy's Piedmont region that features gourmet dining and visits vineyards and thermal baths, and a five-day tour of Holland that takes in Van Goghs and historic windmills.



courtesy of Celebrity Cruises

Trevi Fountain ©Shaun Egan/Stone

(Rome continued)

newly restored Cappella Sistina. Be humbled by the magnificence of the Basilica di San Pietro, the world's largest church, and brave masterpiece fatigue at the Musei Vaticani.

On day three, plan a walk at dawn through the piazzas and past the palaces of Old Rome, free from the bustle of commerce. Follow up with a sentimental backward coin toss at the Trevi Fountain. In the afternoon, amble from Trajan's Market (the ruins of an ancient multilevel shopping complex) along covered and open walkways, past terraces that overlook the remains of the Imperial and Roman Forum, to the great basilicas of Santa Maria Maggiore and San Giovanni in Laterano.

On your fourth day, lose yourself in the baroque sculptures of Bernini; his masterpieces, with their tangle of curves and twists, can be found at the Galleria Borghese. Then make your way to the Colle Oppio to see the underground remains of Nero's Golden House, one of the most extravagant structures of the ancient world. Spend the afternoon exploring the picturesque Trastevere neighborhood, where authentic Old Rome is laced with a shot of bohemian spirit and a dash of just plain seediness.

End your Trastevere tour at a café facing Santa Maria. At dusk, the golden mosaics high on the front of the church are suddenly illuminated with spotlights. Apéritif in hand, try to come to terms with the fact that you have seen only a fraction of Rome's treasures. Four days have only whet your appetite for more.

NEWS IN BRIEF

With tourism booming in **Hungary**, hotel owners in Budapest are building new hotels and renovating old ones to double the number of rooms in the five-star category . . . If you want to branch off from traditional tourist haunts, request the *Mediterranean Mosaic 2000* brochures from **Amelia Tours**, which specializes in customized tours to Sicily, Malta, Tunisia, Cyprus, and Sardinia . . . **Peter Deilmann Cruises** has added two new luxury ships to its six-vessel fleet and expanded its European river cruises to two hundred and thirty sailings, including wine tours on the Danube and weeklong jaunts on the Rhine . . . It's rare indeed when tourists' transportation costs shrink rather than skyrocket, so it's big news that **Rail Europe's** Swiss Card train passes (for first- and second-class travel through Switzerland) are markedly less expensive this year . . . More cost-cutting news: **Norvista** is reducing its prices (up to $200 savings) for a nine-day Scenic Finland package, which has nineteen New York departure dates from May 25th through August 19th . . . **First European Cruises** is also floating a special incentive fare that's about a thousand dollars cheaper than brochure rates for cabins on its eight-hundred-passenger luxury liner, the Flamenco, headed for deliciously cool, northern European waters this summer . . . While Madrid's a sparkling choice for those seeking stimulation in a vibrant foreign capital, the fully informed are pressing on to **Spain's** Andalusia, Cantabria, and Castilla y Leon—all getting travel accolades this year. Air Europa (888-2EUROPA) now offers scheduled nonstop service from JFK to Madrid and, once there, members of the Spain Tour Operators Association can guide your travel every step of the way . . .

(continued)

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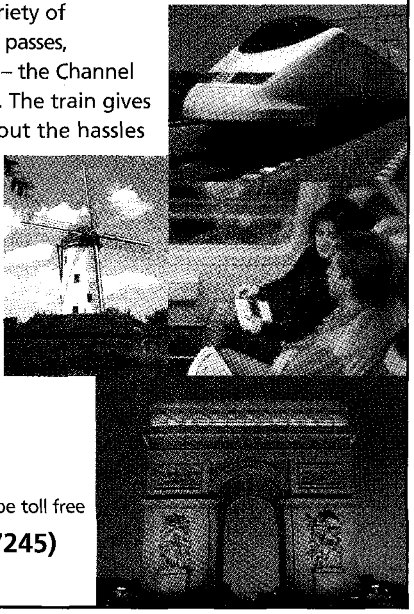

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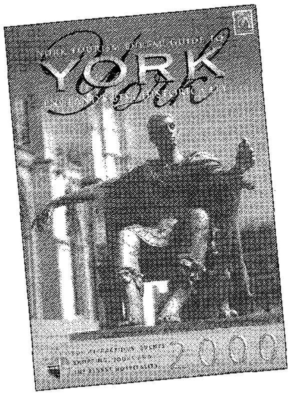

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(News in Brief continued)

For those who want a taste of Europe without leaving the continent, there's the **Montréal Museum of Fine Art** exhibit, "From Renoir to Picasso." This one-time tour (June 1–October 15) will bring eighty-one masterpieces from the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris and include works by Cézanne, Matisse, Modigliani, Rousseau, and Utrillo as well . . . **EL AL Israel Airlines** transported Pope John Paul II from Tel Aviv to Rome earlier this year, and a Vatican committee has appointed El Al as "The Official Airline to the Holy Land" for pilgrims travelling to Israel this year. The airline, which boasts the most nonstops between Israel and the U.S., recently introduced an innovative "Fly & Change" program, which allows passengers to exchange money onboard at competitive rates and without any fees . . . **Tilley Endurables** makes good on its name with yet another virtually indestructible piece of adventure travel wear, the lightweight LT5 hat. It comes with a lifetime guarantee, a two-year, all-peril insurance policy with a fifty per cent deductible against loss or theft, and a four-page owner's manual. Start packing.

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8. Employees of *The New Yorker* magazine and their families are not eligible to enter.

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10. For name of winner send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to *The New Yorker* Marketing Department, 4 Times Square, 21st floor, New York, NY 10036 after September 5, 2000.

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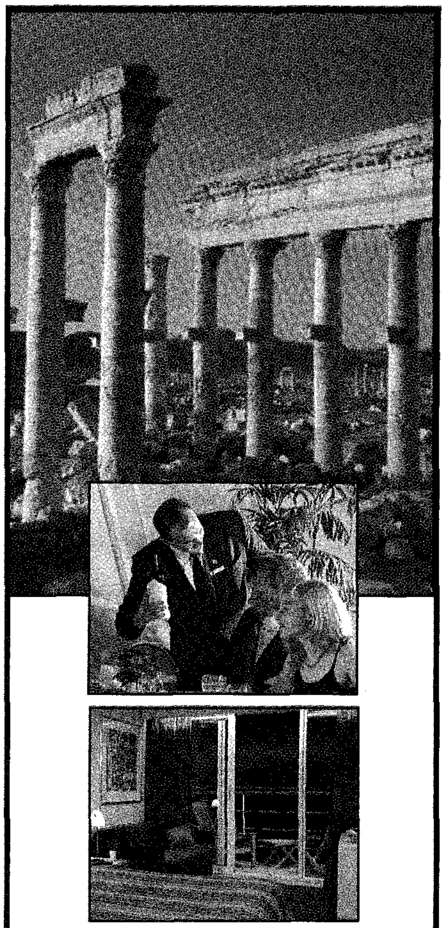

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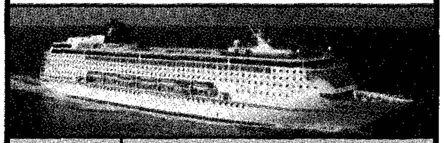

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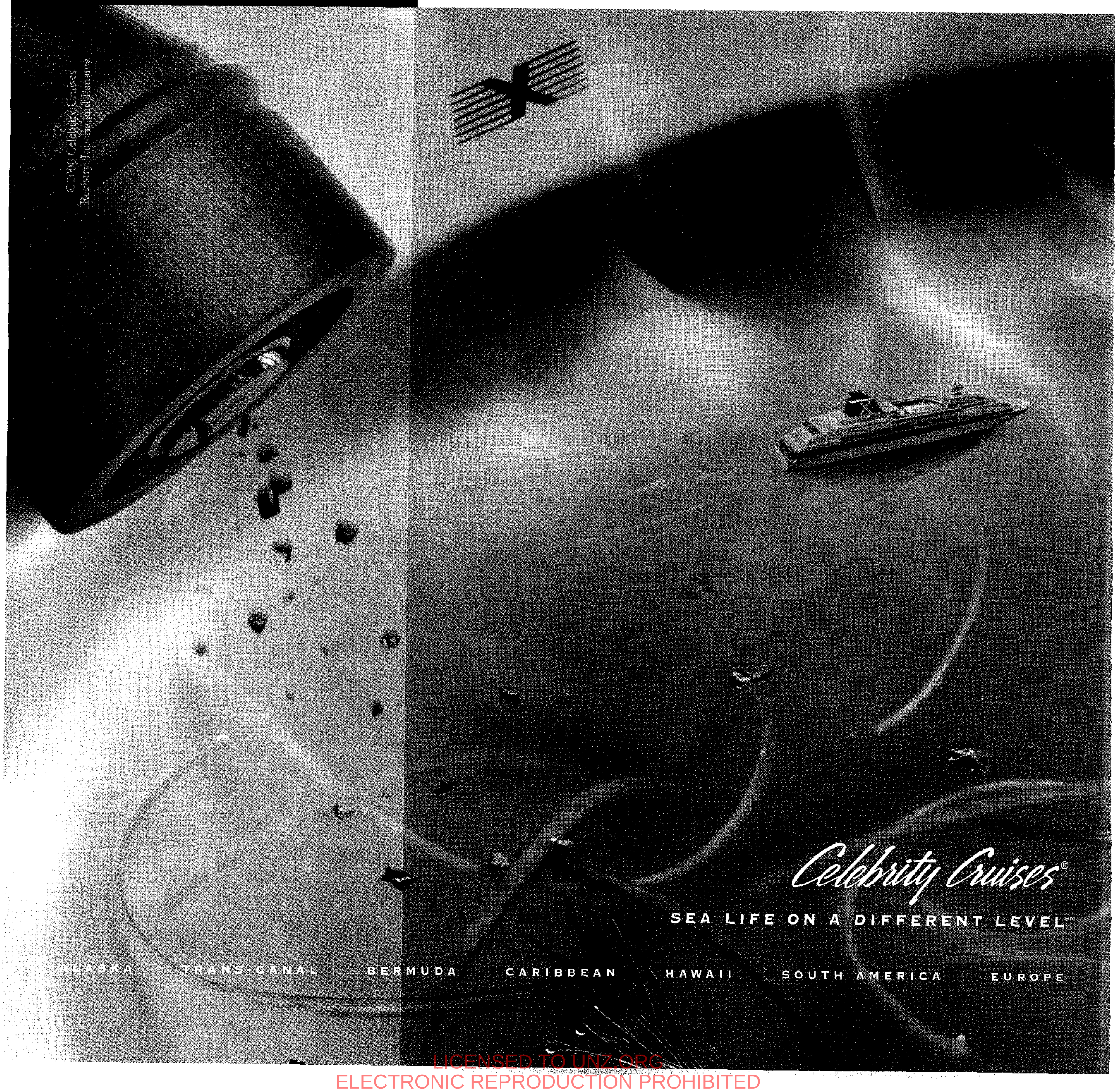
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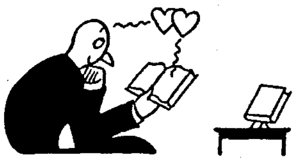
THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT
TELLTALE HEARTS

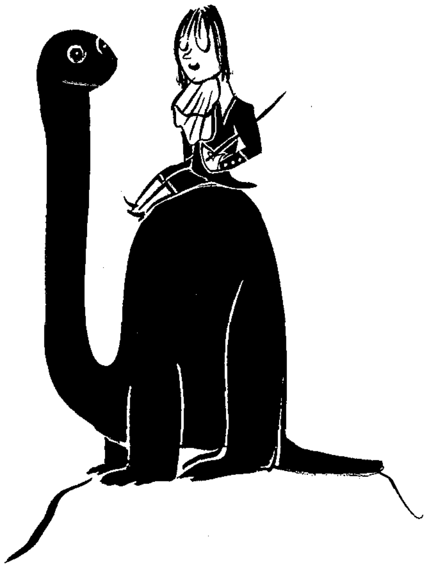


Two hearts have been beating in the world's mind, thumping away like native drums. In case you somehow missed it, or them, they are the heart of the last Dauphin of France—Louis XVII, as he would have been crowned, had the times and the Jacobins not conspired against him—and the shockingly four-chambered heart found in the fossilized body of a dinosaur in South Dakota, not quite beating, but practically still warm.

The Dauphin's heart, first, ended a mystery, and reminded us of how little we like to see mysteries ended. It had been sitting in a jar—a very nicely decorated jar, to be sure—in Saint-Denis, north of Paris, where the Kings of France have their tombs. The heart had been taken from the ten-year-old boy's body by a sympathetic doctor after the poor kid's death, from consumption, in the spring of 1795. Ever since, his supposed heart has been passed around from claimant to claimant, like the Stanley Cup, but always with a nimbus of doubt around it. Now French doctors have taken a little chunk, compared it with bits and pieces of Marie Antoinette and other relatives, and decided that the heart in the jar is, beyond doubt, the young King's.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

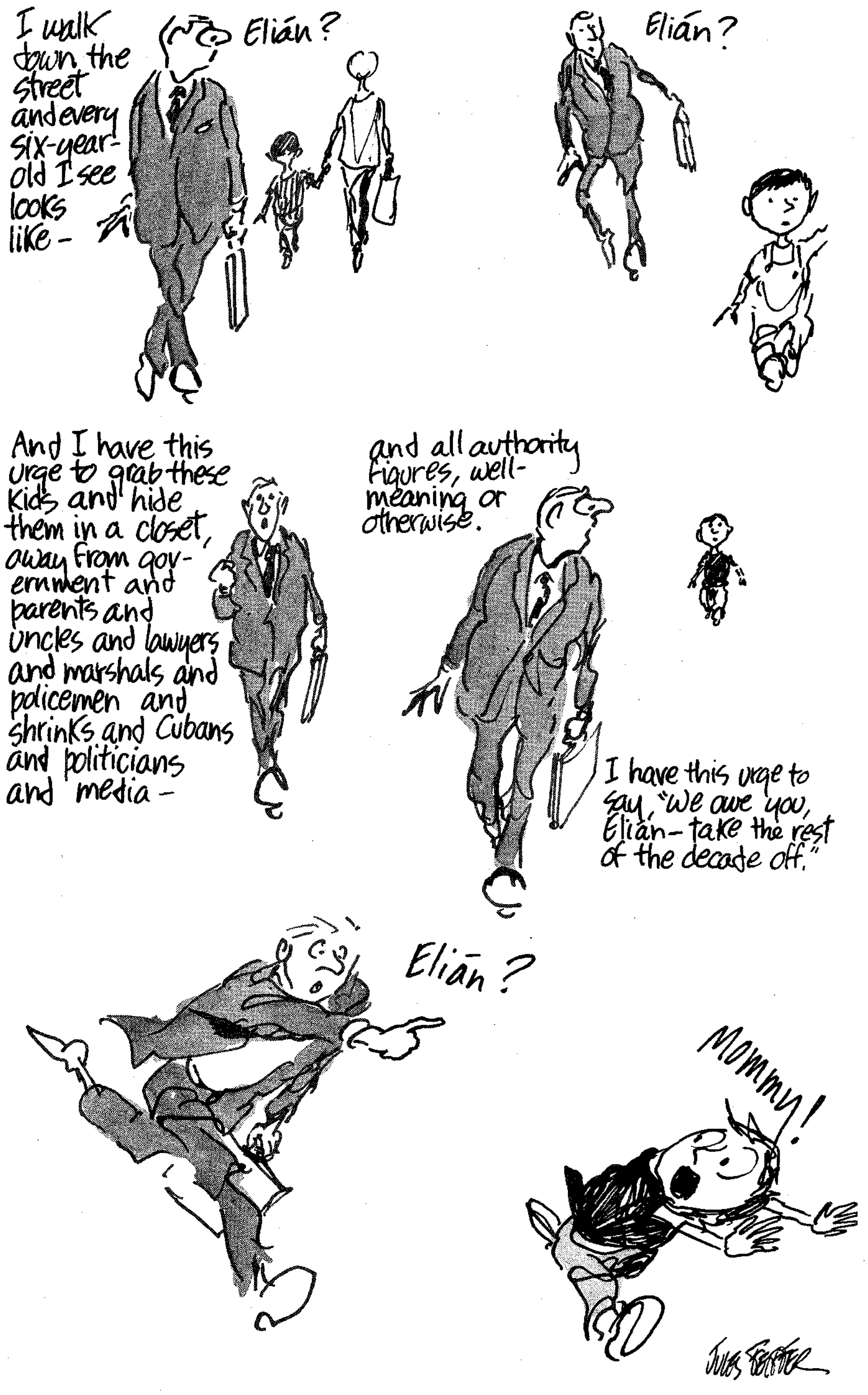
Americans may feel just a little sad at this revelation, since the counter-story—of the Dauphin's abduction and removal to these shores—lived on as a bit of American folklore, and, with a cosmic serendipity, touched the lives of both the greatest American artist and the greatest American writer of the nineteenth century. John James (really, Jean-Jacques) Audubon claimed in his diaries to have been exactly that Dauphin, and though it is still debated whether this was his belief or a belief inserted in his diaries by later generations of Audubons, it added, at the very least, an extra zing to his already romantic venture. Mark Twain, meanwhile, used the legend to invent his own Dauphin in "Huckleberry Finn"—as the pure form of American scalawag and con man, the opportunist always ready to shed tears for the sad fate of sundered children. (Hello, Miami?)



If the Dauphin's heart ends one legend, the dinosaur's heart feeds another, adding a chapter to the ongoing replacement of the nineteenth-century idea of a dinosaur—stony, stupid, and unsentimental—with a new one: louche as Brad Pitt, full of heart and guile. The four-chambered organ found in the extinct monster is "amazingly modern," we're told, which suggests, once again, that these reptiles might have been warm-blooded, and not sluggish at all. The old dinosaur is now as dead as the young Dauphin.

Neither new heart will end any controversy or argument. The believers in cold dinosaurs, like the believers in cold fusion, will remain frozen in place; some insistent true Dauphin, like the Lindbergh baby, will still wander the American West. Yet within these two hearts beats one story, for the truly odd thing is that we *care* so much. Of all the specialty meats that one might be stirred by, hearts are the least obvious, since they are plain dumb pumps—not our software but our old-fashioned hardware. Yet they are still obviously the crucial bit of viscera, the one that was plucked from the corpse of a consumptive child, and the one that made the front pages when it was found in the fossil in the sand (and this although we already have some dinosaur skin and even dinosaur droppings).

This is surely because, in some strange and atavistic manner, we want a heart to


I walk down the street and every six-year-old I see looks like -
Elián?
Elián?
And I have this urge to grab these kids and hide them in a closet, away from government and parents and uncles and lawyers and marshals and policemen and shrinks and Cubans and politicians and media -
and all authority figures, well-meaning or otherwise.
I have this urge to say, "We owe you, Elián - take the rest of the decade off."
Elián?
MOMMY!
JULES FEIFFER

• •

be a heart. We want some scrap of meat to be the seat of the emotions, the place where feeling is found. Hearts touch us in ways that toes and strands of hair and even droppings do not, because they are the last resting place, the final, thumping vault, of our deep, permanent, incurable folk vitalism—our desire to assert that feelings stand apart from minds, and cannot be reduced to them.

When a heart pops up in the papers, new or old, dinosaur's or dauphin's, we salute a little. We may know for certain that poems don't come from pumps, that, as one pro put it recently, "consciousness and decision-making arise from the electrochemical activity of neural networks in the brain." But how these activities become feelings, instead of stopping short at computations, remains as mysterious now as it has ever been. The heart remains in imagination that other place, the home of whatever it is in us that makes us uniquely royal or reptilian, the spot where the quiddity of things resides, the summer house of the particular spirit. *Le coeur est mort, vive le coeur!*

—*Adam Gopnik*

RAG TRADE
A TECTONIC SHIFT IN THE LIFE OF THE POWER SUIT

On the day last month when the venerable Wall Street law firm of Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft announced an official end to more than two centuries of starched collars and sombre business suits, Robert O. Link arrived for work dressed like a man returning from a country-club brunch. Link, who is Cadwalader's managing partner, wore a sports jacket with no tie, a pair of Ralph Lauren chinos, and comfortable brown leather shoes, by Rockport. Under gentle questioning, he admitted that during his former, suit-wearing career he rarely kept up with men's fashion. He purchased his first suit in 1980, the year he graduated from law school, but he couldn't recall whether it had been gray flannel or pin-striped. Over the years, he bought many of his suits off the rack at the annual Barneys warehouse sale. "I spent a lot of time in those suits," said Mr. Link, who charges five hundred dollars an hour for his services. "Still, I'm not going to get too sentimental about them."

Minutes earlier, Mr. Link had celebrated Cadwalader's new fashion policy with a strange little suit-divestment ceremony in the lobby of the firm's Wall Street headquarters. Investment banks like J. P. Morgan and Goldman, Sachs abandoned their formal dress codes months ago, but Cadwalader is the first old-line Wall Street law firm to make a stylistic leap into the laid-back, dot-com era. As part of what the firm's public-relations staff was calling Casualwalader Day, lawyers had been encouraged to donate items from their now obsolete power wardrobes to Career Gear and Dress for Success, two nonprofit organizations that specialize in preparing workers for entry into the

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upscale job market. Racks of designer suits stood in one corner of the lobby, next to boxes of silk ties decorated with golf balls and flying ducks.

Gary Field, a social worker who is the founder of Career Gear, was on hand to oversee the packing of Cadwalader's castoffs into an orange Schlepper's moving van. Times are good for his organization. "It took a while, but I can spot the really good suits now," he said. "You can tell by the way a suit sits on a hanger. The high-quality wool looks solid." That day, Mr. Field, unlike Mr. Link, was wearing a gray silk tie and a solid-enough-looking jacket that he'd purchased at Macy's. "A suit's still like armor," Mr. Field said. "It levels the playing field; it helps people feel powerful."

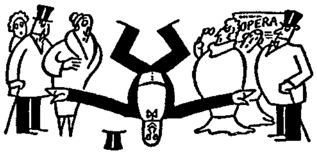
Upstairs, in the hushed offices of Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft, several attorneys still appeared to support this view. Edward Granski reported to work on Casual-walader Day wearing a pair of black leather shoes, handmade by Peale & Company in London, a powder-blue Ermenegildo Zegna tie, silver cufflinks from Thomas Pink, and a charcoal-gray pin-striped business suit by Hickey-Freeman, one of fourteen similar suits in his closet at home. "Two weeks' worth of suits is the average," Mr. Granski, a partner in the firm, said. "They tend to wear better if you give them time to breathe." The new dress code was optional, he explained, and, besides, he had a morning meeting with three British clients, all of whom would be dressed to the nines. "Most of my clients still expect me to look like a lawyer," he said.

Padding through the halls in his Rockports, Mr. Link admitted that he still owned fifteen suits himself and kept one on hand at work, in case old-fashioned clients came to call. He pointed out that Cadwalader had gone through numerous fashion changes since its founding, in 1792. He recalled the days when lawyers were expected to wear their jackets in the halls, and declared, "That's a nice, proud tradition, but you can't sit on it." He concluded, "It's more fun to buy and wear a sports jacket than it is to buy and wear a suit. I haven't figured out all the reasons why, but there's more expression to it."

Mr. Link said that he was pondering whether to relax the dress code even further this summer, by letting the lawyers cut loose on Hawaiian Shirt Friday, but hadn't made a final decision yet. Meanwhile, the firm's chief administrative officer, David Strumeyer, confessed that, although he was one of the architects of Cadwalader's new policy, he had had a little trouble settling on an appropriate casual mix. Mr. Strumeyer was dressed in black slacks and an olive-green Christian Dior shirt, open at the collar. "You worry more in the morning, you have to be a little more focussed," he said. "But I've found that if you stay with a standard color like black you won't get too out there."

—Adam Platt

THE BOARDS
THE FALL OF JUDAS, 2000



It was Manoel Felciano's big break—a shot at playing Judas in the current revival of "Jesus Christ Superstar," at the Ford Center. Judas is the best role in "J.C.S." (much better than Jesus, who has to hit all those pious high notes). Felciano, who usually sings the part of one of the disciples, got to play the role last Tuesday night, because the regular Judas, Tony Vincent, was sick.

The house was packed, in spite of the fact that Ben Brantley had been hard put to it to say anything good about the production in his *Times* review. Some members of the audience could be seen moving their lips along with the words as they were being sung onstage. There are a remarkable number of people who can sing the whole show from memory, instrumental parts and all. (In his review, Brantley admitted to being one of them.) The story of Jesus Christ, with Jesus romanticized as a seventies rock star, represents a melding of powerful belief systems: rock and roll and Christianity. If you encountered it when you were around eleven or twelve, when your pop sensibility was still molten, it could burn itself into your consciousness pretty deeply.

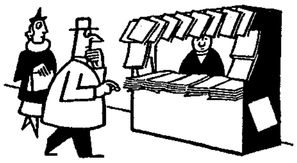
Felciano seemed hurried as he flung himself into his first number, "Heaven on Their Minds." Near the end of the song, he made a particularly emotive rush toward the front of the stage and disappeared. He had fallen into the orchestra pit! There was an awful silence, followed by a thump, then a momentary, appalled pause by the orchestra, which managed to recover and get to the end of the song. As the company lumbered into the next number, "What's the Buzz?," Felciano, with the conductor boosting him from below, crawled up onto the stage and remained there, somewhat shakily. The audience went wild. Felciano's fall, which might have stopped the show, instead brought it to life for the first time.

The incident highlighted a big problem with the new production: it never manages to make the story of Christ relevant to anything real. The original "Jesus Christ Superstar" portrayed Christ and his followers as shaggy hippies who were being wrongly persecuted by the corporate establishment. Today, it's unclear who is the rebel and who is the establishment, and you certainly can't tell the two apart by the clothes they wear. The new show's Pharisees are dressed as Nazis-via-"The Matrix," with some biker gear and gay-disco looks thrown in. The disciples still resemble hippies, but they also look like dancers in a Gap commercial.

At the curtain call, the crowd applauded tepidly for Pontius Pilate, Herod, and Mary Magdalene, but when Judas appeared on the stage they jumped to their feet. Sympathy for the actor seemed stronger than empathy for the character he played, which was not necessarily a good thing for the show. You crucify a man onstage and it seems ho-hum, but the understudy falls into the orchestra pit and everyone feels his pain.

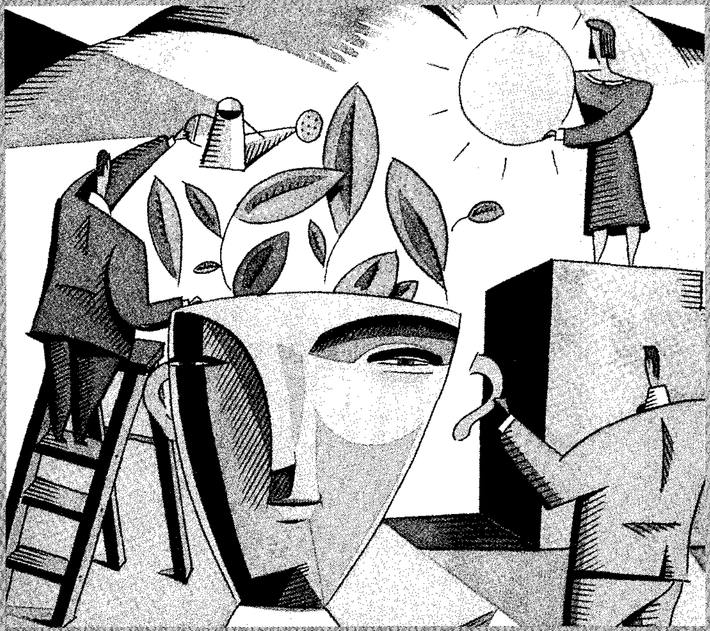
—John Seabrook

THE WAYWARD PRESS
WHERE'S THE OPRAH IN *O*?



"Only a hermit could be unaware of Oprah Winfrey's new magazine, and he'd have to be beyond range of television, newspapers, radio, records, and rioting fans," someone said a couple of weeks ago, except it was actually

Brain Teaser



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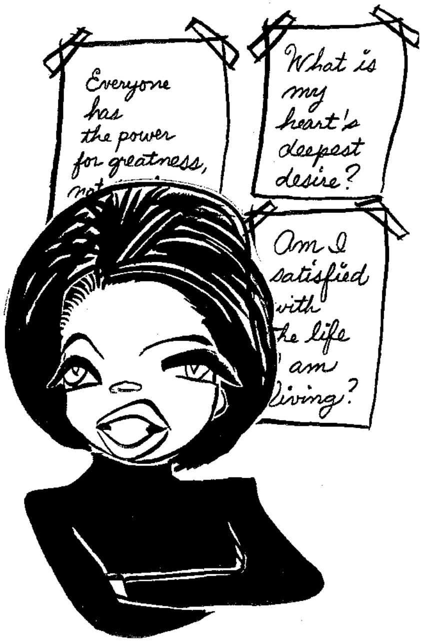
thirty-six years ago and he was talking about John, Paul, George, and Ringo and the quote was on the back cover of "Meet the Beatles!" Still. Oprah Winfrey, Queen of All Media, put her latest unsinkable vessel in the water recently, and, in at least one magazine store on the Upper West Side, it caused a brief flareup of Oprahmania. Late in the afternoon a couple of days after the launch, just around the time that "The Oprah Winfrey Show" was starting, three female subjects of the Queen went into the shop and, within the space of two minutes, snapped up the three remaining copies of the magazine, called *O*, which were stacked near copies of *F*, the magazine for people who have flunked out of school, *X*, the bible of treasure-map collectors, and *I*, one of the dozen or so magazines competing for the market niche of upscale self-important blowhards.


Everyone has the power for greatness, not
What is my heart's deepest desire?
Am I satisfied with the life I am living?

Oprah Winfrey

Winfrey's mark is all over the magazine, starting with the cover: under the title, which comes from its founder's nickname, are the words "The Oprah Magazine," and posed in a wicker chair is Oprah herself, looking like a million bucks (which is 1/150 of what she earned in 1999). The cover looks much like that of another personality-driven magazine, *Martha Stewart Living*, and the magazines contain complementary articles this month: in *O* we are told about the virtues of an all-white decorating scheme, and in *M.S.L.* we find out how to restore the original whiteness to our walls, marble floors, and rubber spatulas. Both magazines, as it happens, have calendars for the month of May, but the differences in the two magazines' Weltanschauung can be more or less summed up by the entries for May 12th: one of them tells you what *she's* going to be doing ("Wash greenhouse windows"), and the other tells you what *you* should be doing ("Ask yourself what you're really afraid of in life: Ridicule? Rejection? Loneliness? Instability?").

Many people find Winfrey's show inspirational, but her magazine is constructed more along perspirational lines. There's work involved, and you'll need tape, refrigerator magnets, and several notebooks. You are supposed to keep a journal recording each courageous act you perform, "no matter how small," and to "make it a point to add one new item every day." You are supposed to make a list of your health goals, and then fill in and tear out the supplied "contract." There is a step-by-step planning guide for making your dreams come true. You are supposed to write out the words "Don't take anything personally"—one of the "four agreements" concocted by the shamanic teacher Don Miguel Ruiz—and put them on your fridge. (Things you might take personally but shouldn't are, to use Ruiz's examples, someone's saying to you, "Hey, you are stupid" and "Hey, you look fat." I couldn't agree more; if you allow such words to bother you, you are a big fat idiot.) There are questions you are supposed to ask yourself or people in your reading group, such as "How many of your statements could others interpret as criticism?" Next to that page are five bookmarks you can tear out and equip with tassels. On page 131, there are four of Winfrey's favorite sayings printed on thick paper. "You can slide these pullout cards into pretty frames, slip them into your handbag or paste them into a journal. Or you can follow Oprah's lead and tape the cards to your mirror." Then by all means get out the blender and treat yourself to "Oprah's favorite smoothie."

Winfrey may be all over her magazine, but Oprah herself, the charismatic mover of mountains, is strangely absent from its pages. In person—on TV, that is—she is an awesome figure with the very real power to change lives, and she talks to and listens to people with a respect and interest that many of them have never experienced. In print, the force is not with her: it's the difference between an audience with the Queen and a promotional brochure about the Queen's life style. *O* is basically just another one-dimensional women's magazine, and it has a self-nullifying, numbing quality; it can have a piece about a half-Korean woman who as a child watched her uncle and brother kill her mother for refusing to sell her into slavery right next to a piece about "five fabulous things to do with fresh strawberries." (May I suggest a sixth fabulous thing? Try just eating them.) The literal binding together of the inane and the serious doesn't add up to something that's worthy of Winfrey, and, unlike her TV show, which is new every day, you're stuck with it for a whole month.

Another important quality missing from *O* is Winfrey's humor; on TV, she manages to project earnestness and be funny at the same time. A recent guest was Sarah Ban Breathnach, who wrote a book that Winfrey is high on: "Simple Abundance," which teaches you how to feel and express gratitude. (One of the ways you do this is by keeping a "journal of gratitude." The practice of writing things down in order to find, heal, nurture, and empower the real you has become so important to the self-help way of life that a new word had to be invented for it: a woman interviewed in one of the stories in *O* says, "It took ten years of journaling for me to even figure out what I wanted.") Breathnach's book has been very successful, and she told Winfrey that the book works for people "because I'm Everywoman." Oprah, looking shocked and upset at this usurpation of her identity, said, "I thought *I* was Everywoman." Whether she is or she isn't, she can at least laugh at herself (and expertly disarm would-be Oprahphobes by doing so). I find Winfrey admirable and compelling, but I won't be subscribing to what she calls her "personal growth guide." I feel kind of bad about that, but on May 16th I should start to feel better. That's the day when, according to *O's* calendar, I'm scheduled to "practice saying no without feeling guilty."

—*Nancy Franklin*

mingo, wing and ed lee
surfers/restaurateurs

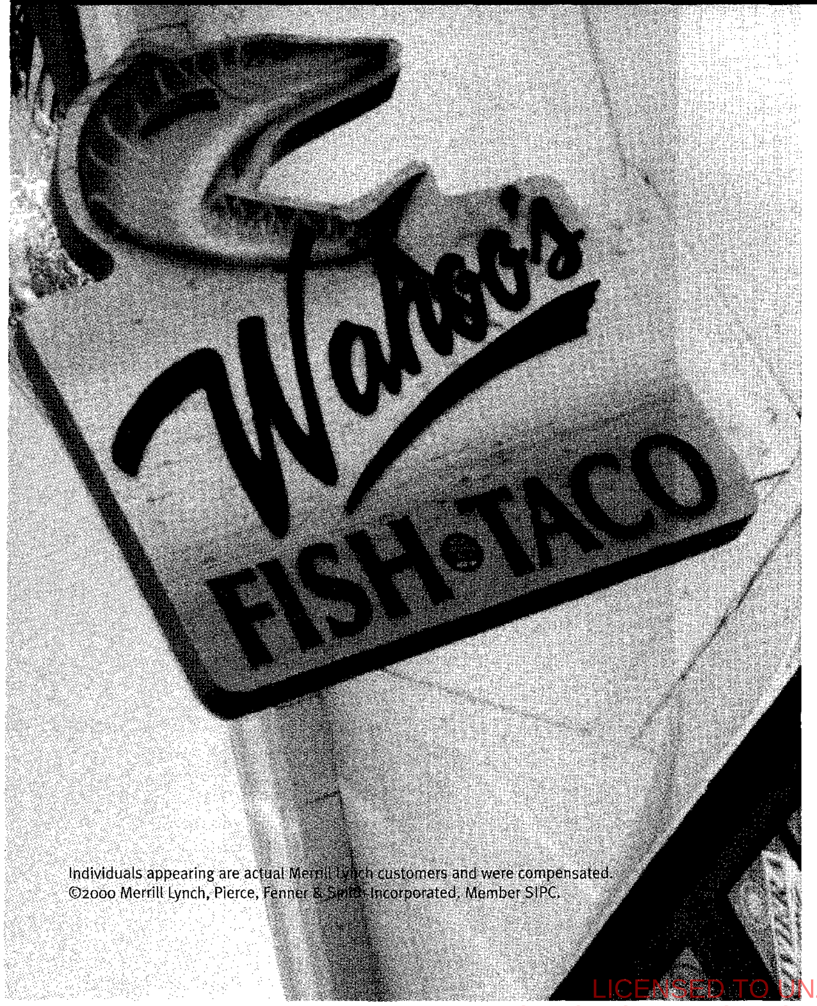
mingo: after the first wahoo's caught on, we wanted to open some new restaurants. but nobody would take a chance on these surfer guys.

ed: dom and merrill said we do see it down the road, so we'll jump in and partner with you guys.

wing: it's not just about lending us money. dom's put us together with people in our industry to share ideas with and with the right people at merrill to help us grow the business.

wing: he did make one questionable decision, though. he took up golf instead of surfing.

"they saw past the shorts and t-shirts"



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dom alvarez
duffer/financial consultant

dom: don't let the surfer dude thing fool you. these guys are good businessmen.

they've gone from 1 restaurant to 13. we put together a plan for their personal finances, too, and they've gone from, well...interesting... to a place where they've all got healthy retirement plans.

i think their dad, who's also a client, must be happiest of all. he no longer has to use his house as collateral on their loans.

be bullish Merrill Lynch

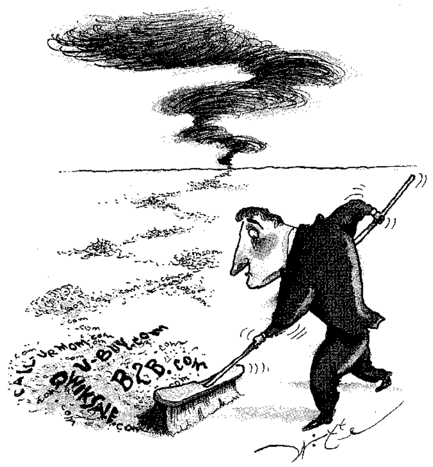
THE FINANCIAL PAGE

IS THERE METHOD IN THE NET-STOCK MADNESS?

LeatherXchange.com is not, as its name might suggest, a Web site for the price-conscious dominatrix but a place to "negotiate, buy and sell raw and semi-processed hides and skins worldwide on the Internet." In other words, LeatherXchange.com is yet another start-up looking to capitalize on what was, until recently, the Internet's trendiest sector; namely, business-to-business—or "B2B"—commerce. (That's as opposed to business-to-consumer—or "B2C"—commerce.) Three months ago, LeatherXchange.com could have looked forward to a spectacular I.P.O. and a soaring stock price. Today, the whole thing feels as over as "Felicity," and this shift tells you almost everything you need to know about what's been happening to Internet stocks.

The past eighteen months have seen investor attention move promiscuously from one sector to another—from portals (like Lycos and Yahoo) to on-line retail (eToys and CDNow) to content sites (TheStreet.com) to B2B companies (VerticalNet) to infrastructure companies, which do stuff that all these other companies rely on and favor names you can't pronounce (Inktomi, anyone?). The pattern is always the same. First, there are audacious projections of how big the market for content or E-tail or B2B or infrastructure is going to be. Then a slew of companies are launched, each of which promises to be the leading player in the sector. Stock prices get bid up in the wake of the hype and some impressive early growth numbers. And then, abruptly, the investor whirlwind moves on, leaving carnage in its wake. Last summer, the shakeout came to the portal market. Last holiday season, on-line retailing was hit. In the past several weeks, it has been B2B's turn. From a distance, all this looks like caprice or madness.

And yet the stock market has ultimately been quite discriminating in its choices. Not everyone has been knocked down, and the companies left standing are the companies that are poised to become the leading players in their markets. Those Internet portals competing to be your home page are a good example. As recently as a year ago, companies like Infoseek and Lycos could still consider themselves serious contenders. Today, Yahoo and America Online have handily surpassed their rivals in traffic and earnings, and account for ninety-five per cent of the market value of all the portal sites combined. Last October, on-line retailers like eToys and Drugstore.com had billion-dollar valuations. Today, there are only three really sizable E-commerce players (Amazon, eBay, and Priceline), and they, too, account for close to ninety-five per cent of the market value of the entire sector.



MICHAEL WITTE

The B2B boom is only now winding down, but it has run true to form, starting with the barrage of hype that launched it. Since the beginning of 1999, estimates for the size of the coming B2B market have grown from a trillion dollars to $7.3 trillion; some people have even said fifty trillion. Doesn't that sound like the greatest business opportunity ever?

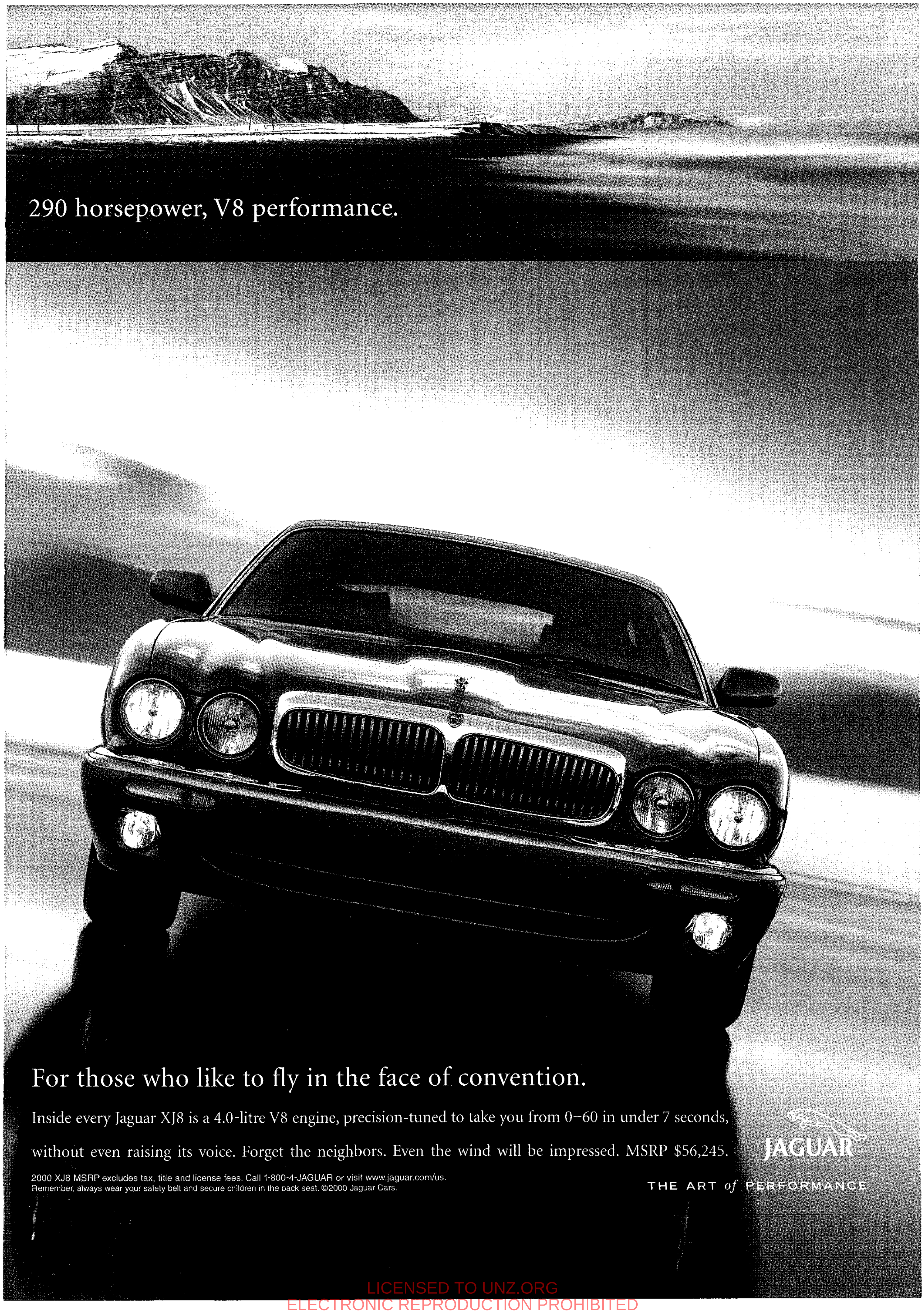
The problem is that those new B2B companies aren't buying or selling any of that $7.3 trillion dollars in goods. They're typically setting up auction sites or exchanges where buyers and sellers can get together. Besides, those trillion-dollar figures are essentially bogus, the result of double counting. A lot of B2B commerce consists of products being sold and resold—from manufacturer to wholesaler to distributor to retailer. You get that trillion-some figure when, each time a dollar changes hands, you count it as a brand-new dollar. What's more, B2B E-commerce is supposed to shorten the chain of reselling, by allowing, say, hospitals to buy medical products directly from manufacturers. In doing so, it will also shrink the size of the over-all market. There's a $7.3-trillion B2B market, in other words, only as long as B2B companies don't exist.

But the main thing to note about the B2B stampede—forty firms are now competing in the health-care market alone—is that most of the contenders will fail. Once, people thought the Internet would be a place where a hundred flowers of commerce could bloom. But, in sector after sector, the Net has started to look like a winner-take-all proposition.

You could call it Zipf's revenge. George Zipf was a linguistics professor at Harvard who, in the thirties, discovered something curious about the frequency with which words are used. He found that a few words were used constantly, while most words were used only rarely. And this pattern, he showed, could be described mathematically by what's known as a power law. In English, the most common word is used a hundred times as often as the hundredth most common word.

Zipf's law, it turns out, can describe all kinds of natural and social phenomena, including city sizes and earthquakes. Researchers at Xerox PARC have found that it also describes the way people use the Web. A huge number of sites have very few users, while a very few sites have a huge number of users. (One per cent of Web sites account for fifty-six per cent of on-line traffic.) Michael Mauboussin, the chief investment strategist at Credit Suisse First Boston, has shown that Internet stock prices follow a Zipf distribution, too. Of the total market capitalization of Internet stocks, a majority is accounted for by a handful of companies. The winners are taking all, and leaving only the scraps for the also-rans, like those companies whose stocks are now off eighty or ninety per cent from their highs. So Zipf's law strikes—hitting business-to-business stocks as it once hit business-to-consumer stocks—and it's safe to say that, in the fad-prone new economy, it will strike again. After all, there's still the business-to-alien market to pursue.

—*James Surowiecki*



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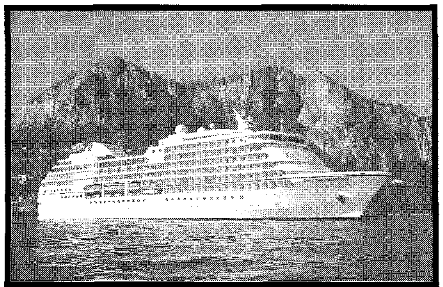

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AROUND CITY HALL

PERSONAL AND POLITICAL

The vulnerability of a tough mayor.

BY ELIZABETH KOLBERT

Last Thursday, Rudy Giuliani held a press conference in the Blue Room at City Hall to announce that he had prostate cancer. The day before, the Mayor had been spotted leaving Mount Sinai Medical Center, and so, even before his announcement, there had been rumors about his health. He told reporters that he had decided to discuss his condition publicly to bring this speculation to an end. The cancer, he said, had been diagnosed early and was a “treatable form.”

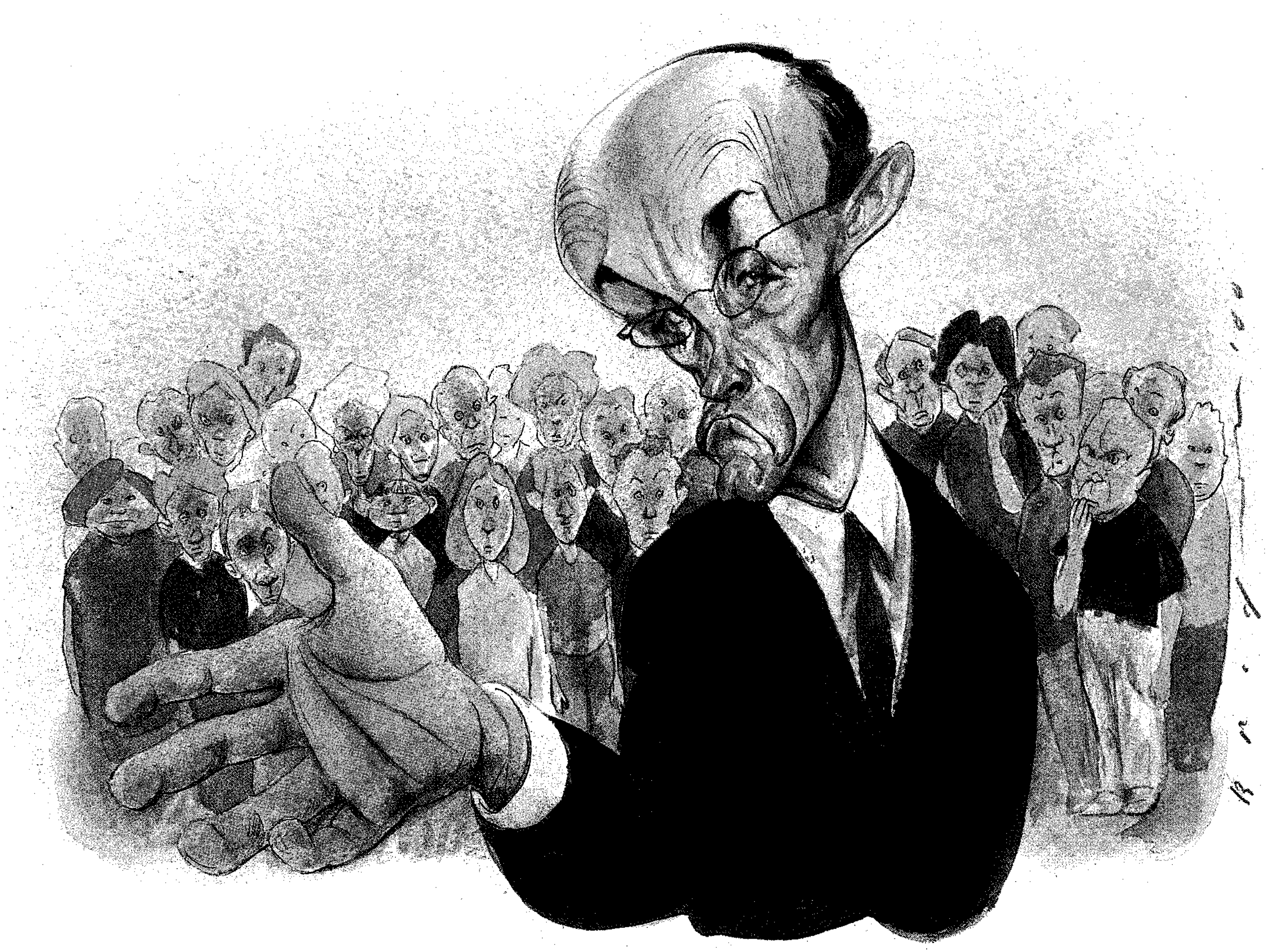
Throughout the press conference, Giuliani seemed relaxed and cheerful, even, as one television reporter subsequently put it, “serene.” Asked several times and in several different ways whether the diagnosis would affect his Senate candidacy, the Mayor said he did not yet know; he hoped to remain in the race, but he would base that decision on the course of therapy his doctors recommended. When, at the end of the press conference, he was asked whether his illness would make him any nicer, the Mayor was more definitive. “No way!” he responded. The very next day, speaking at a Republican dinner in Saratoga Springs, he proved the point by trashing the President and describing as “Clintonian” words that “don’t mean what they say.”

A life-threatening illness has a way of softening most, if not all, hearts, and Giuliani was inundated with expressions of concern, including one from the First Lady. He had become a figure of sympathy, something that—as the question about his temperament and his answer, however joking, suggest—would have seemed almost inconceivable just a few hours earlier.

For as long as Giuliani has been Mayor, his reputation has oscillated between toughness, which is a political virtue, and meanness, which is not. After the shooting of Patrick Dorismond by an undercover cop seven weeks ago, it seemed to have rocked once too far in the wrong direction. So many New Yorkers were disturbed by his response to the shooting that the polls, which had shown him leading Hillary Clinton for almost a year, suddenly reversed. Attention that had been focussed on the First Lady’s peculiar compulsion to represent a state where she has never lived shifted, almost overnight, to the Mayor’s equally peculiar, but darker, compulsion to offend. On a more comic note, even his wife, Donna Hanover, appeared to have lost patience with him; after years of stable half-estrangement, which entailed her not being seen with him but also not embarrassing him, she suddenly joined the cast of “The Vagina Monologues.” A cartoon in the New York *Post* showed the Mayor reading the news and fainting dead away, little clouds of steam rising from his temples.

The fact that Giuliani has cancer has obviously overshadowed his wife’s provocative behavior, and, to a certain extent, his own, and it is impossible to predict what the Senate race will look like in a few weeks, or even if he will still be in it. But Giuliani’s illness also points up what was most unfortunate about the Dorismond episode: the Mayor’s refusal to identify with those in pain or to take the subsequent criticism of his actions at all seriously. At any given moment, this refusal may have reflected a simple lapse in judgment or a temporary loss of control, but, taken together, the events of those weeks, and, indeed, of his entire campaign so far, suggested something different. The Mayor, it seemed, was not so much trying—unsuccessfully—to hide his contempt for others as attempting something much more ambitious, which was to run on it.

The New York Senate race could be said to have officially begun back in February, when Mrs. Clinton formally announced her candidacy in a lengthy ceremony that included



News of Giuliani's illness made him a figure of sympathy, something that would have been almost inconceivable a few hours earlier.

an eighteen-minute biographical film, several introductory speeches, and a twenty-seven-minute address by the candidate herself. There were plenty of things to disagree with in all the remarks by and about the First Lady, but the Mayor decided to take issue with "Captain Jack."

Someone, almost certainly not Mrs. Clinton, had mixed "Captain Jack" into the soundtrack that played before the ceremony began. The song, written by Billy Joel, tells the story of a lonely young man who spends Saturday night listening to music and getting stoned, and it conveys a rather gloomy message about drug use. Nevertheless, at a news conference the day after the First Lady's announcement, Giuliani read a line of the lyrics out loud—"Captain Jack will get you high tonight, and take you to your special island"—and declared its import to be "Let's say yes to drugs, let's glorify drugs, let's glorify pot." The next day, speaking on a Rochester radio station, he broadened his criticism, saying that the song also encouraged masturbation.

In the months following, the fuss over "Captain Jack" proved to be central to the emotional logic of Giuliani's election effort. Almost every day, the First Lady would attend a gathering of concerned citizens in some obscure town like West Henrietta, or issue a position paper pushing some esoteric government program like the Broadband Deployment Grant Initiative. The Mayor, meanwhile, made fun of Arkansas.

Not long ago, I caught up with Giuliani during one of his infrequent upstate trips. The Mayor clearly doesn't like to travel north of Van Cortlandt Park, and there are many who have posited that he wouldn't have entered the Senate race if, under the city's term-limits law, he weren't soon to be out of a job. Last week, when he revealed his diagnosis, many people speculated that he would welcome the opportunity to withdraw from the race, but by the following night the Mayor seemed to be trying to tamp down the speculation. "I'm very hopeful it's all going to work out, in all respects," he told a roomful of cheering Republicans.

On the evening I was following him, the Mayor had travelled two hundred and fifty miles, to Syracuse, for just one public event, a speech at a dinner hosted by the local Chamber of Commerce. The theme of the dinner was "The Grass Is Greener Here," a choice that, given the city's decades-long decline, seemed ironic in ways that the chamber probably did not intend, and on each table there was a centerpiece made out of a little plot of turf. Giuliani likes to start his speeches with a mob reference—often, nowadays, to "The Sopranos." This time, however, he chose another of his stock openings, an imitation from "The Godfather": "Thank youse for invitin' me heah tonight." He then moved on to his accomplishments in

STEVE BRODNER

lowering crime ("Seventy per cent fewer murders"), reducing the welfare rolls ("More people moving from welfare to work than any place in America"), and improving the economy ("What we did is give you your money back so you decide how you want to spend it"). Of all his achievements, Giuliani said, he was proudest of having converted New York City welfare offices into "job offices," a change that was brought about, as he put it, "because we care about people in a responsible, adult, mature, loving fashion, not out of some kind of sense of our own guilt." As for why he should be elected to the Senate, the Mayor implied that he would do for the rest of the state what he has done for the city, but what he had in mind in terms of federal legislation, or financing, or even advocacy, he never specified.

Afterward, the Mayor spoke to a group of local reporters outside the banquet hall. Someone had given him an orange Syracuse basketball jersey, which he was wearing over his shirt and tie. There was time for only about half a dozen questions before he was due back at the airport, and Giuliani took almost every one as an opportunity to twit his opponent. Asked about "soft money," he said, "I think the Clintons have to learn the following: New Yorkers are not dumb. We are not suckers." Asked about Mrs. Clinton's criticism of his education record, he replied, in mock amazement, "The Clintons are raising the trust issue? You've got to be kidding me."

At the heart of the Dorismond episode is a tragedy that the Mayor had nothing directly to do with. On March 16th, Patrick Dorismond, an off-duty security guard, was standing outside a bar in midtown Manhattan when he was approached by an undercover narcotics officer, who reportedly asked if he knew where to buy drugs. He is believed to have told him to move on, and, for reasons that are still unclear, a scuffle ensued, during which another officer fired a single, fatal shot. Dorismond, who was twenty-six, was unarmed.

The shooting occurred at a time when racial sensitivities in the city were particularly raw; just three weeks earlier, a jury had acquitted the four police officers who killed another unarmed black man, Amadou Diallo. The day after Dorismond's death, the Mayor, in the name of balance, authorized the release of his juvenile-arrest records. Generally, such a move requires a court order, but Giuliani proceeded without one, under the novel theory that, since Dorismond was dead, his privacy rights had, albeit without his consent, been waived. With the exception of the city's corporation counsel, just about every lawyer familiar with the statute took issue with this theory, and at a hearing on the matter convened by the State Legislature one witness after another testified that the Mayor's actions had violated the law's intent. Even many Republicans complained that Giuliani had crossed the line, and wondered what possible purpose his conduct could be serving.

Despite the near-unanimity of opinion, the Mayor remained steadfast. He continued to intimate that the dead man had been responsible for his own shooting, and declined to attend Dorismond's funeral. At one point, Giuliani declared that Dorismond had been no "altar boy"; later, upon being advised by a reporter that Dorismond had, in fact, been an altar boy, he refused to comment, calling the question "argumentative."

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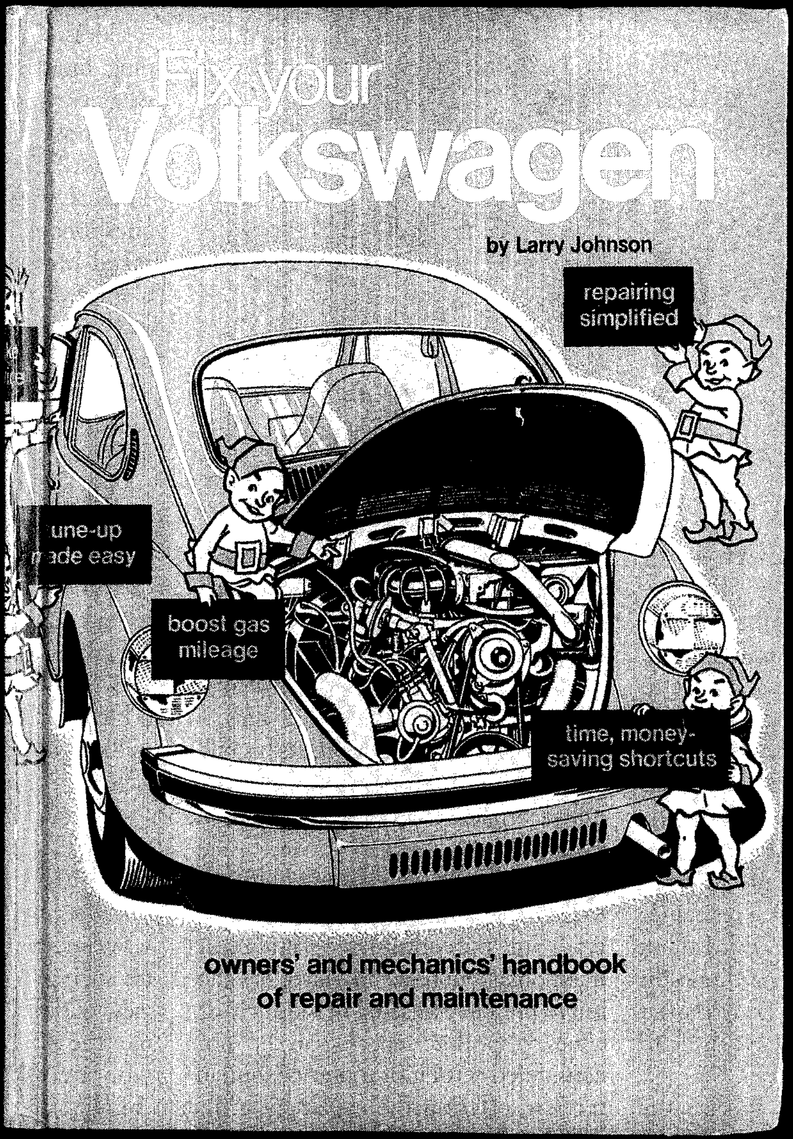
B. Smaller

A few weeks ago, I went to see the Mayor at City Hall. He spoke to me in his office, which is decorated in shades of burgundy and gold and contains a large portrait of Fiorello LaGuardia, along with busts of Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan. It was one of the first extended interviews that he had granted since the shooting, and I asked whether he had had any second thoughts about releasing Dorismond's records.

"I read the law myself," he said. "The law contains no prohibition against releasing the records if someone is dead. It doesn't speak to the subject, and therefore it leaves, even granting the other side as much leeway as possible, an ambiguity. The purpose of sealing is to protect the ability of someone who got in trouble to get a job, to not be discriminated in housing, et cetera, et cetera. All these things have to do with life. If the State Legislature wanted to create a protection beyond death, they should have written it into the law. So legally I don't have any reconsideration."

I tried again. Even if his action had

June 7, 1974. Lost during long, strange trip.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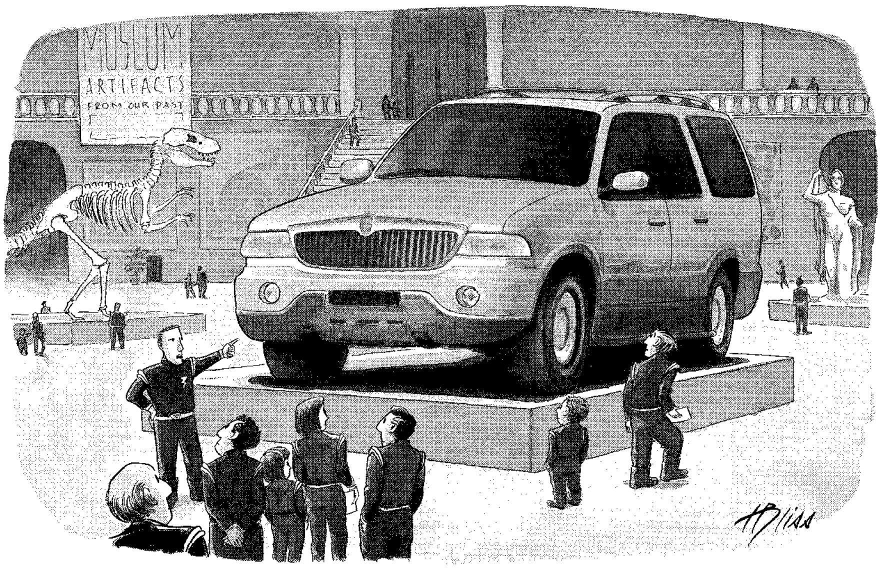

"We're not certain why they disappeared, but archeologists speculate that it may have had something to do with their size."

been legal, given the anguish it had provoked, did he have any regrets? "The ultimate result is that it's helped the city, even if it isn't understood at the time," he said.

But wouldn't it have made sense to offer some expression of remorse, simply for the sake of peace in the city? "I can only do the things that I believe," the Mayor said. "I don't believe this was the wrong thing to do. If I did, I would say it immediately. I know it would help me politically. And I don't have a resistance to doing that if I believe it. But I think we have to talk to each other honestly. We can't allow the domineering impact of political correctness to have us lie to each other."

Later in the interview, I asked the Mayor about some of Mrs. Clinton's criticisms of him. How would he respond to her charge that she is running on issues, while he is avoiding them? "I can't figure out the issues," he said. "I hear the slogans, but I haven't figured out the issues she's running on. I would say she's running on slogans. I think I'm running on issues. There isn't a single thing that I'm running on that I haven't done already, in great detail."

How about the criticism that he is uncaring? "What I would ask people to do is think a little bit deeper about the difference between substance and perception," he said. "For the Clintons, this has largely become a slogan that works, because it's sort of Pavlovian, but it doesn't go any deeper than that."

Giuliani is the only politician I have ever interviewed who gives the impression of being more cautious and deliberate in private than in public. This, of course, in large measure reflects his public excesses. (Even among all the elected officials making overheated comments about Elián González last week, Giuliani managed to stand out by referring to the federal agents as "storm troopers.") Still, the contrast raises interesting questions about how the Mayor has chosen to present himself. He routinely declines to speak to reporters in the more considered setting of a one-on-one interview, offering the explanation that press conferences provide more "direct" communication with the electorate.

On one of the few beautiful afternoons of this wet, raw spring, the Mayor decided to hold his daily "press availability" in the town of Bedford, on the grounds of the local Shell station, where the price of gas was two dollars and twenty-three cents a gallon. The ostensible reason for choosing Bedford, about an hour's drive north of Manhattan, in Westchester County, was the high price at the pump. The real reason, though, was obvious: Bedford is right next to Chappaqua. "You should have some familiarity with Bedford, New York," the Mayor said, addressing himself to the absent Clintons. "It's kind of close to another part of New York that you claim to be part of."

Giuliani kicked off the event with some remarks on the President's energy policy, which he called "bankrupt," and his foreign policy, which he labelled "feckless." "This Administration is napping, hibernating, asleep, unfocussed—whatever you want to call it—with regard to what's going on with gasoline," he said. "That's spelled n-a-p-p-i-n-g." Then he opened the press conference to questions on other topics. A reporter asked him about efforts by the City Comptroller, Alan Hevesi, to block several "welfare to work" contracts approved by the Giuliani administration.

"I think this is an attempt by Alan Hevesi to bring us back to where we used to be," the Mayor declared. "These are the people who created the philosophy of dependency, and they are apparently annoyed that we have five hundred and fifty thousand fewer people on welfare, and that we're down to the lowest number of people on welfare since 1967. After all, they created and supported and did nothing about over one million people on welfare when they had a chance to run city government."

Hevesi, a Democrat, has argued not that the contracts are a bad idea but, rather, that they were awarded using improper bidding procedures. Giuliani, however, does not have much patience for such procedural debates. His world view allows for just two types of people: those who are for him and those who are either misguided, blind, or simply corrupt. He is widely feared for his tendency to exact retribution from those he considers to be in the latter camp; New York City's Public Advocate, Mark Green, describes him as "the embodiment of the Machiavellian ethic 'Better to be feared than loved.' " A few weeks ago, when a state court sided with Hevesi, the Mayor responded as follows: "Democratic judge. Democratic decision. Jerky decision."

Not infrequently, the Mayor's press availabilities devolve into public scoldings, during which he castigates reporters for various forms of psychological and moral degeneracy. In response to a recent question about whether it was appropriate for him to send his children to private

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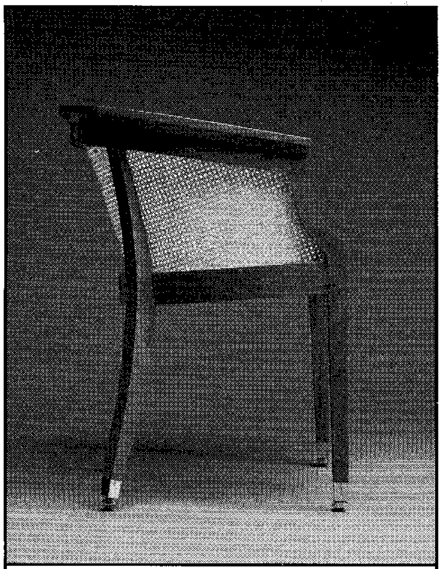

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school, for example, Giuliani accused a reporter of "voyeurism." In response to another recent question, about Mrs. Clinton's economic proposals, he responded, "You guys, you're unbelievable; you're, like, knee-jerk, knee-jerk, knee-jerk," and he suggested that the reporters go "join the Democratic National Committee."

Giuliani's reluctance both to travel and to grant interviews means that much of his Senate campaign has been conducted through his availabilities, a decision that may seem perverse, except that a lot of his rhetoric requires the presence—real or imagined—of a disbelieving enemy. In this sense, the press is not so much an actual antagonist as a stand-in for a whole class, perhaps a whole stateful, of people who, Pharisee-like, continue to resist his message. At the Bedford Shell station, the Mayor several times complained that reporters were not paying enough attention to higher fuel prices, even as more than two dozen of us jostled for space around the gas pumps, desperate to record every word. "Things like this would be major issues if there were a Republican President," he said at one point. "So maybe you should examine the way in which you look at the world."

The press conference Giuliani gave last Thursday was impressive for a lot of reasons, not the least of which was that it was so straightforward, and, as much as anything could, it seemed to vindicate the Mayor's faith in the format. Giuliani outlined what he knew about his condition, which was that his cancer appeared to be confined to the prostate, and how he had come to know it, which was through a blood test and then a biopsy. He expressed confidence that he would be cured, but he noted that prostate cancer had killed his father. He did not seem to be trying to wring emotion from the occasion, nor did he have much to say when reporters pressed him for a big thought.

"Absolutely," he said, on being asked whether the diagnosis had made him reconsider his values. "Just the contemplation of it for the last two weeks makes you think about what's important in life, what are the most important things. But, you know, you should be thinking about that anyway. But do I have an answer yet? No, I don't have an answer yet."

These days, it is pretty much obligatory to lament the consumerist, poll-driven, finger-in-the-wind style of American politics and to speak nostalgically of an age, perhaps mythic, when elected officials sought guidance in something more lasting than focus groups. Giuliani, it is safe to assume, follows the polls as carefully as the next guy, and a lot of his positions reflect the very pragmatic calculations of a Republican running in a Democratic state, as does his decision not to spend a lot of time talking about these positions.

But the Mayor appreciates, in a way that most other politicians apparently do not, the paradoxical effect of paying too much heed to public opinion. His best impulses, which were on display last Thursday, when he spoke so unaffectedly and without self-pity, reflect this, and so, too, do his worst. Giuliani's irascibility, his insensitivity, and his towering self-righteousness are clearly not the product of any considered study, and his Senate campaign has been based on the premise that these qualities can, with a certain amount of squinting, be taken for assets: the more unattractive and obviously damaging his conduct, the more authentic it must be. Bruce Teitelbaum, Giuliani's campaign manager, summarized the Mayor's appeal as follows: "Even if we disagree with the guy, we respect him for standing up for what he believes in."

Nothing is more authentic than mortality, and on a human level, as much as on a political level, the Mayor's announcement last week was so powerful precisely because it was so real. In the end, reconciling the calm and the grace with which he is facing his illness with the many less appealing features of his recent campaign is not that difficult if one simply accepts what has been the Mayor's account of himself all along: when he says he really doesn't care what anybody else thinks, he really means it. ♦

CONSTABULARY NOTES FROM ALL OVER

From the Wheeling (W. Va.) Intelligencer.

Larry Milhouse, 311 Clay St., Martins Ferry, reported at 2:21 a.m. Saturday that his home had been entered, three fishing poles were missing and he smelled a familiar body odor in the house.

Milhouse recognized the smell as being the smell of feet belonging to someone he knows, according to the report. He gave the name to officers.

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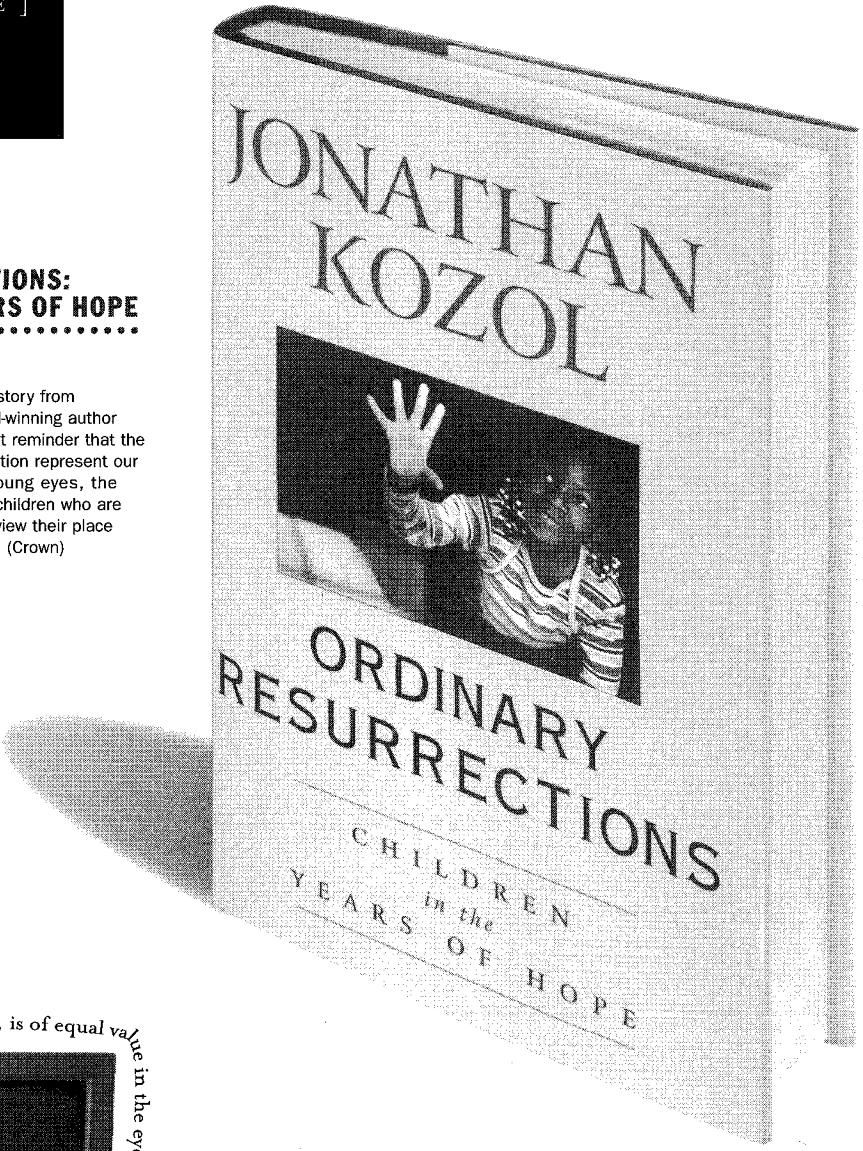
JONATHAN KOZOL
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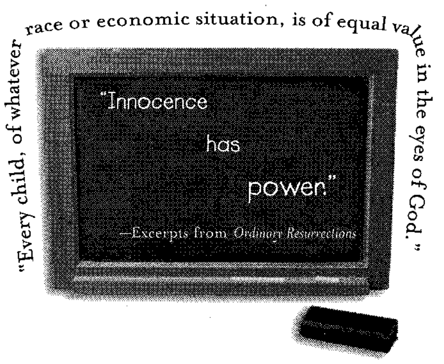
"Every child, of whatever race or economic situation, is of equal value in the eyes of God."
"Innocence has power."
—Excerpts from Ordinary Resurrections

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DAY TRADING MADE EASY

BY ANDY BOROWITZ

The stock-market turmoil of the last few weeks has caused many to point the finger of blame at a convenient target: me. I'm used to it. Ever since I became a full-time day trader, I have been called everything from "a cyber-speculator" to "an embarrassment to your father and me." Contrary to what its critics may think, however, day trading is a science, like chemistry or astrology, with its own rigorously tested set of principles. You wouldn't perform open-heart surgery without first going to two years of medical school; similarly, you shouldn't risk your life savings on the Internet without spending the thirty minutes it takes to learn these rules. The rules of stock selection apply equally to all industries: automotive companies, like Ford and General Motors, or chip makers, like Intel and Frito-Lay.

Remember, day trading is not the same thing as gambling. You're not betting on stocks. You're betting on yourself—and yourself is betting on stocks.

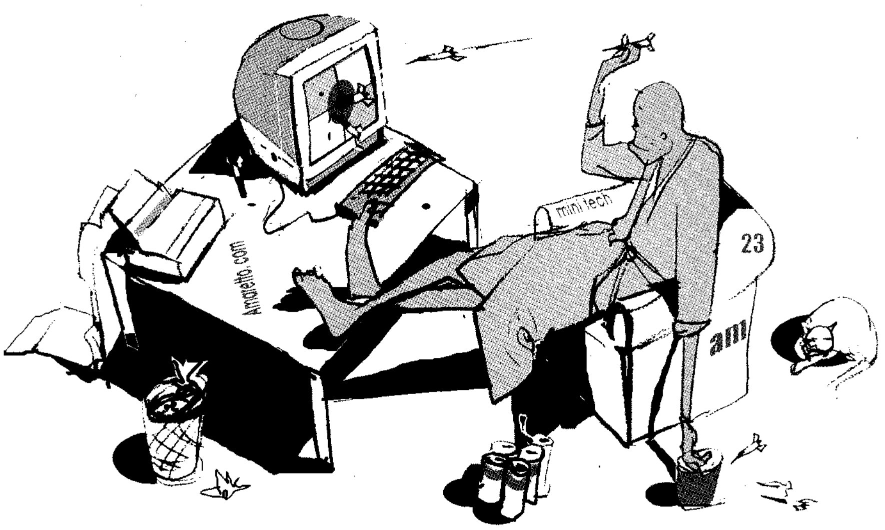
1. *The "Name Game."* Often, when novice investors do "research" on a stock, they breeze right past the name of the stock and delve into obscure and mind-numbing data like profits, cash flow, earnings projections, etc. They are making a common "beginner's mistake," because, nine times out of ten, the most important information about a stock is contained in the name of the stock itself. The old adage "You can't judge a book by its cover" does not apply to stocks, and for a very simple reason: stocks do not have covers.

Let's start with some simple examples. Amazon.com, America Online, and Amgen have been three of the stock market's biggest success stories. What do these stocks have in common? They all begin with the letters "Am." Using history as my guide, I recommend the following stocks for every day trader's portfolio:

•Amalgamated Toxic Spilling
•American Lint Supply
•Amorouschimps.com

To take another example, Microsoft, Cisco Systems, Sun Microsystems, and Advanced Micro Devices have all zoomed in price over the last few years, and little wonder: they all have the words "micro" or "systems" in their names. Be on the lookout for new stock offerings that contain either of these words: these stocks will always go up, big time.

What is a "system"? What is a "microsystem"? You're asking the wrong guy. It's safe to say that they both have something to do with technology. And I'll go out on a limb and say that a "microsystem" is probably smaller than a "system." But just how small is a microsystem? So small that it could be lost in shipping, or fall down a grate? You got me. Which leads me to another ironclad rule of stock selection:



ISTVAN BANYAI

2. *Never own a stock long enough to know what the company does.* I'm sure some of you will bristle at this notion. You'll say it is the duty of every investor, before buying a stock, to know the company inside out. Well, it *is* someone's job to know what business a company is in—*the C.E.O.'s, not the day trader's!* Nothing irritates me more than the idea that we are supposed to spend all the live-long day trying to figure out what a company's profits are, etc., while some C.E.O. calls it quits at five and hits the links with his Martini-swilling pals.

As investors, we demonstrate our faith in a company by tirelessly buying, selling, and buying it again twenty or thirty times in a given day. So we should demand accountability of these slacker C.E.O.s and deliver the following message, loud and clear: Hey, Mr. C.E.O.—figure out what your company does so we don't have to.

3. *The "Dartboard Portfolio."* Every so often, the *Wall Street Journal* runs a feature in which a panel of so-called experts is asked to put together theoretical stock portfolios. The results of these portfolios are then compared with a "dartboard portfolio": a portfolio assembled by throwing darts at a newspaper's stock listings. Surprisingly, the dartboard portfolio sometimes yields better results than those designed by the "pros." What does this tell us? *A dartboard is an excellent way to choose stocks.*

In your home office, hang up a dartboard covered with a newspaper's stock page. Tape a line across the floor six feet from the dartboard, and remain behind the line as you hurl the darts. Remember, stepping over the line is cheating, and it may affect your investment results. To resist the temptation to cheat, I remain seated at my desk, throwing darts with my left hand while operating the mouse with my right. This maximizes both throws and trades per minute.

All of these day-trading rules are important, but there is one final rule that is more important than the rest. Simply put: When you are day trading, if something sounds too good to be true, go for it. ♦

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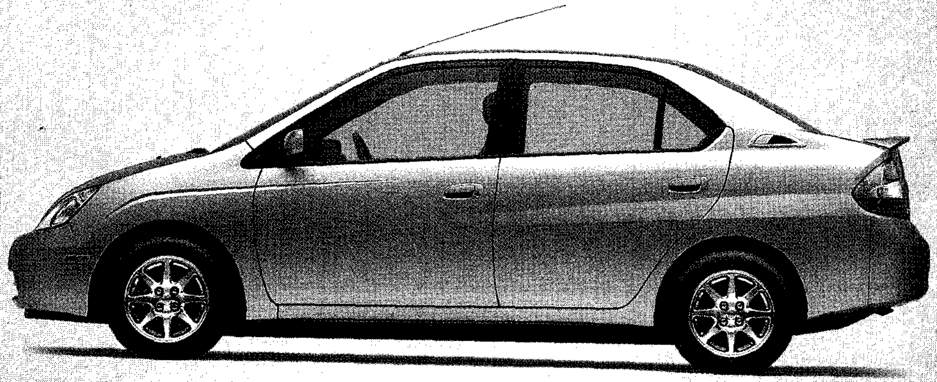

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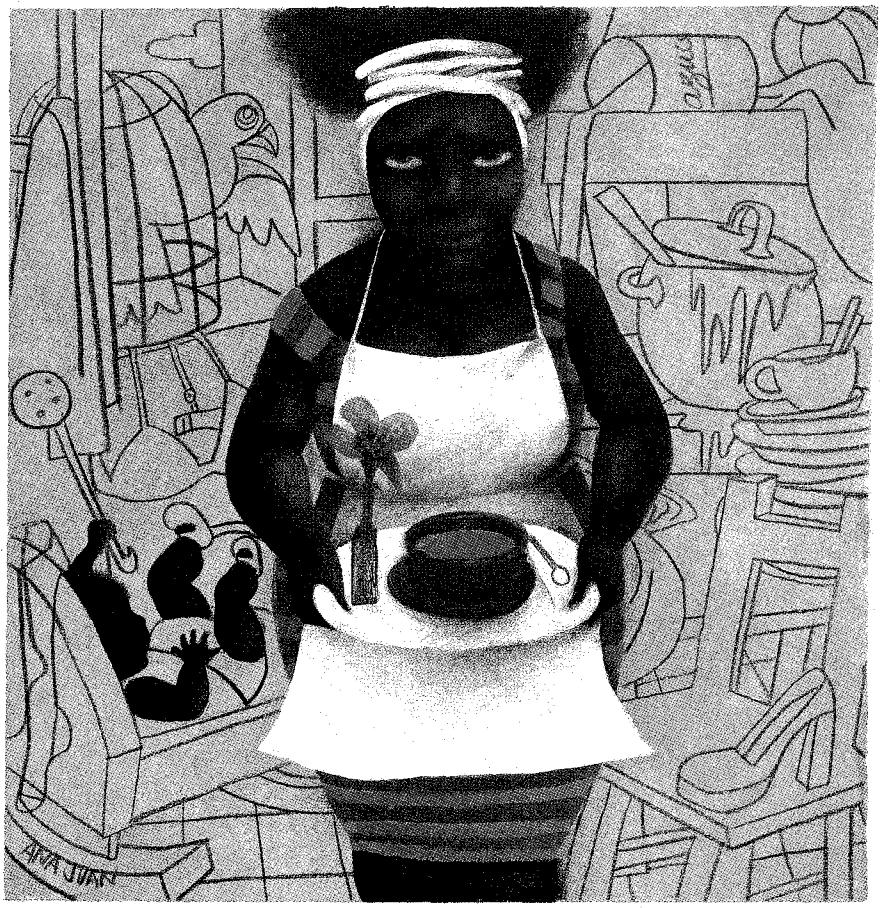
PERSONAL HISTORY

MY SERVANT PROBLEM

It's not them. It's me.

BY ALMA GUILLERMOPRIETO



Sharad was brilliant. I taught her to cook and she learned all too quickly.

ANA JUAN

The first maid I hired when I moved to Rio de Janeiro lasted less than a month. Her replacement—I'll call her Flora—a pale, shy, stocky woman with lank hair, had grown up in the backcountry of Minas Gerais before emigrating to a favela in Rio. She had never worked "outside," as she put it, because her husband, who, like her, was an Evangelical, didn't want his wife exposed to the dangers of the world beyond the home. But her neighbor Jair, who took care of electrical and plumbing problems for me and for many other foreign correspondents, and who was also an Evangelical and a person of great influence in his neighborhood, recommended Flora to me and convinced her husband that I was a respectable lady in whose house the Devil did not lurk.

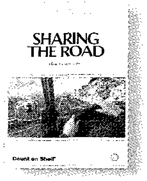
For the first few days, Flora barely opened her mouth. After serving me breakfast, she would start sweeping the floor, the first time brushing the broom across my feet as I was in the middle of a gulp of coffee.

"Flora, for God's sake! Don't sweep my feet!"

"Begging the Senhora's pardon," she murmured, and went off somewhere else with her broom. She was so scared of me that she left a rosary of little farts trailing behind wherever she went. An incident like the one at breakfast sent her running to the bathroom in the service area behind the kitchen.

So the days passed, in silence, until one morning, after serving me breakfast, as she was sweeping around my feet (but

Out of sight
out of mind.



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not on top of them) while I drank my coffee, she stopped, crossed one leg over the other, and leaned on the broom handle.

"The Senhora is a journalist, isn't that right?"

"Yes, I am."

"And goes out reporting, isn't that right?"

"Yes, I do."

There was a pause.

"Then why hasn't the Senhora come to see the baby that was born with a pig's face just around the corner from my house? A whole crowd of journalists have come, but the Senhora, *no*."

After this exchange, she lost her terror of me—I imagine because she decided that I was lazy or incompetent—and our relationship became more familiar. "The Senhora is forgetting her bag," she would say, and I would turn back from the front door. "She is forgetting the keys," and I would turn back again. "She forgot her earrings." Back again. "The Senhora forgets everything," she would comment, with some satisfaction.

She stayed with me until I left Rio, and the day I went to the airport she wept like Mary Magdalene, but that, fortunately, is not the last memory I have of her. I returned the next year to do a piece on Evangelicals, and I took the opportunity to go and see her at her home. Flora hadn't become unemployed; the secretary of a correspondent friend had noticed what a straightforward, decent person she was and had hired her. Her new employer was undoubtedly much more demanding than I was, but she must also have been a better household manager and a better teacher, because I found a transformed Flora, happy and full of confidence in her skills and herself. I met her husband and admired how sturdy her son had grown, and at the end of the afternoon Flora walked me to the edge of the favela, talking all the way about her new job, other friends of mine with whom she was still in contact, her son. Suddenly, she took my hand as if I were her dear friend, and we went on like that, walking, chatting, and holding hands, until we reached the highway, where she said a very cheerful goodbye and pronounced a blessing on me.

STRANGENESS

Ariel had mixed thoughts:
The broken century
And the erotics of the paradoxical;
The intimate delusions

And a light, innocuous pretense
Set against the still more fabulous impostors;
The smallest will, beating its wings
Against the cage of space—

These had all become familiar
And unexceptional. We live them,
Live in and through them.
Strangeness lay in ordinary moments

Placed against a background
—Is there another word for "eternity"?—
Of the impersonal: curved space
Foaming with brief particles

As you leave the room.

—*John Koethe*

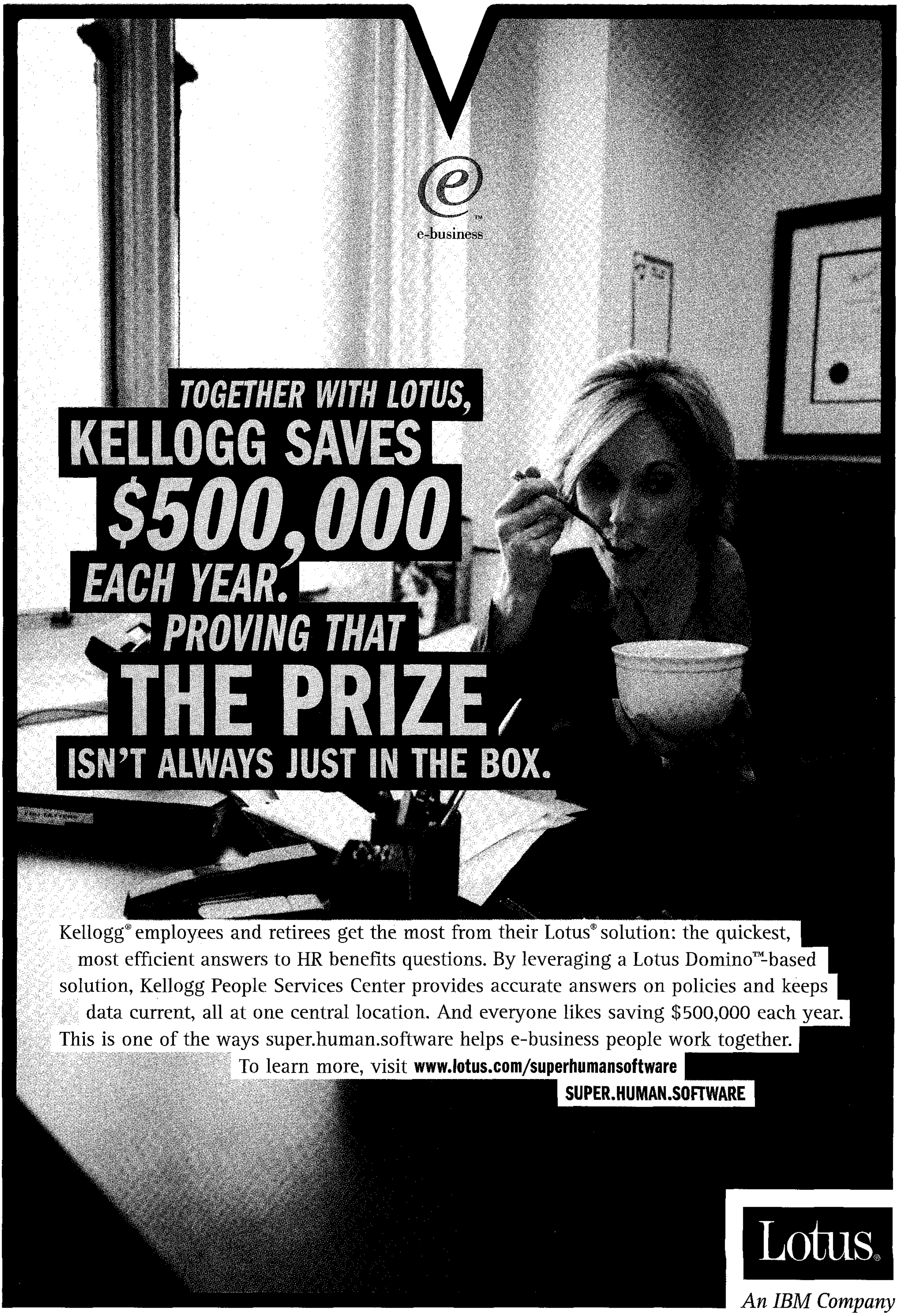
I grew up in Mexico. In my family, which was poor but had tremendous aristocratic pretensions, there was never money for a servant. I suppose that is why as an adult I've felt confusion and a certain unease with these women. The first time I had a household employee was in Nicaragua, a few months after the Sandinista triumph. I had rented an ugly house in a middle-class neighborhood, and felt the need for someone to help me fill the place up and also to help with the enormous logistical difficulties of living in a country that was in the process of creating itself. Somehow—I don't remember how—Rafaela arrived. She was even-tempered, punctual, and quiet, and, to my daily astonishment, she excelled at creating salads that were not only fresh and delicious but arranged on the plate with the beauty of a still-life. What was more, she had a three-year-old daughter, Rosa, who looked like a little doll modelled out of brown sugar and never threw tantrums.

We lived in peace until a European woman I will call Laura came to share the house. She and I quickly became close friends, but we had a serious difference of opinion regarding the immorality or non-immorality of having a domestic employee (a wage slave!) in a revolutionary country.

For me, the morally correct thing was to give a needy woman a job. But it also happened to be the convenient thing, and for my new friend Laura such convenience was immoral. Laura's family was rich: for her, servants were a living indictment of the spiritual squalor and decadence that characterized her class. She felt that squalor was something you contract when you allow others to do what you can and should do for yourself. Allowing another woman to clean the bathroom and cook the food made Laura feel guilty and at risk, and, perhaps for that reason, she didn't like Rafaela.

It ended like this: I had a Chinese bracelet, made of enamelled silver, that I was very fond of, and that I would take off and leave in the bathroom before I went to bed. Laura, like me, had a lot of revolutionary friends who came over to our house and would sometimes still be there the next morning. Among them was a handsome young black man from the Atlantic coast. One day, my bracelet disappeared. There were only two possibilities—either Rafaela had stolen it or Laura's friend had. For lack of the slightest evidence to implicate one or the other, the crime had to be resolved on ideological grounds.

"You think he's guilty because he's black," Laura would say.



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VILLE ET VILLAGE

"No!" I would answer, indignant. "You think it's Rafaela because she's a servant."

Our quarrels were blind alleys. A revolutionary would be incapable of stealing. A defenseless woman wouldn't risk her job over an eye-catching but inexpensive bauble. We never got down to the crux of the issue, which was that if Rafaela had been the perpetrator of the theft I was prepared to take a broad view of it, because I would miss her silence and her neatness, her salads and her little daughter more than I would miss the bracelet, while Laura was ready to make the same kind of trade-off for her handsome revolutionary.

Laura turned out to be the better strategist. We decided to move to a much prettier house, but at the last minute Laura stated her terms: she would not sign the contract if Rafaela, the thief, stayed with us. I didn't even put up a fight. Rafaela left, weeping. "It's because of the bracelet, isn't it, Señora?" (Laura had never succeeded in making her call us *compañera.*) "I swear I didn't take it."

Laura and I lived comfortably in the new house, but we ate badly and I never stopped missing Rafaela and Rosa.

How much does a servant cost? It isn't easy to calculate the ratio between her salary and the permission we give her to take charge of our things, expecting her not to steal them, though we know she is needy. Nor is it easy to calculate the appropriate salary for someone who, without having to be asked, guards our confidences, protects our sexual secrets, and comes to know us so much better than we know her. By definition, a housekeeper must not cost much, because if she did we would be uncertain of her neediness, and therefore of her loyalty. I was ready to give up my bracelet for Rafaela, but if she had asked me to double her salary I would have said no. After all, I was already paying her twice what my neighbors were paying their maids.

From Rio I went to live in Bogotá, and, on a neighbor's recommendation, the resplendent Sharad appeared at the little garden apartment I was renting. She was tall, black, beautiful as can be, and in the seventh month of pregnancy by a husband who had just left her. She desperately needed a place to live after the birth. I told her yes.

Like every servant who has lasted with me, she was unhurried, affectionate, and honest. She was also brilliant. In fact, I'm certain that the catastrophes of her life were due to her brilliance. She had a restlessness that continually drove her to plunge beyond the preordained limits of her world. She had once modelled for a supermarket magazine, stretched out on a tiger skin, but the magazine people never paid her, no doubt because they knew that someone in her position had no way of making them pay. Then she wanted to be a dancer, and managed to get herself accepted as a trainee in a folk-dance group, but she fell in love with one of the men in the group and became pregnant with the baby girl who was now about to be born.

I taught her to cook and she learned all too quickly. After we had made a *lapin flambé au cognac*, she wanted to torch even beans. One night, she brought forth a cold soupy dish that was completely inedible. "But I got the recipe from one of the cookbooks you brought from Brazil!" she protested, mortified. She had been leafing through my Portuguese cookbooks, and had almost got the recipe right, except that when the book said the mixture should be placed in a frying pan (*na frigideira*) she thought it was to be placed in the refrigerator. She was undeterred by this failure. The books were illustrated with photographs, and, with these visual aids and a few questions about vocabulary, Sharad gradually began to master Portuguese and fine cuisine.

After she had been working for me for several months, I had to take a long trip. I left feeling a shameful giddiness at getting away from the chaos my apartment had become: Sharad was paying less and less attention to such tasks as cleaning the bathroom and making the bed. Her newborn howled at all hours for a mother who had abandoned her in favor of cookbooks.

When I came back, some weeks later, an unrecognizable whale opened the door for me. Sharad was so fat that sweatpants were all she could squeeze into. The baby,

who bawled non-stop, showed signs of neglect, if not of violence. There were mountains of dirty laundry in the service patio and in Sharad's room. In the pantry, the generally ample supplies of flour, sugar, nuts, vanilla, and raisins had disappeared. "Señora, help me!" Sharad said. "I spent all the money you left me on ingredients. I made all the cakes in the cake book, and all the breads in the bread book. If I go on like this, I'm going to burst."

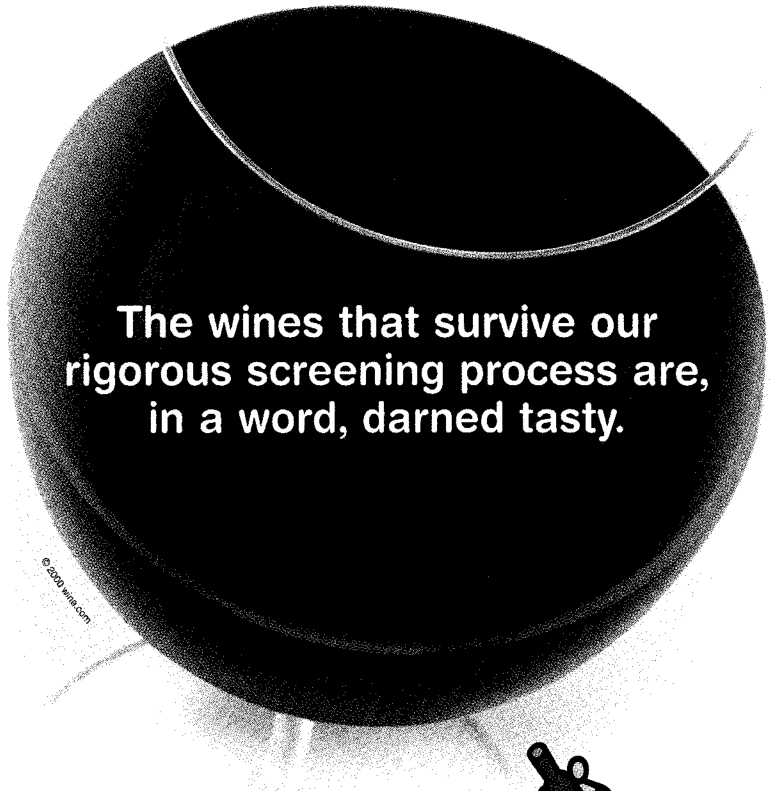
I didn't know what to do. My friends, who had always been suspicious of such an extravagantly beautiful employee ("Careful with the men you have over!" they would say, not altogether jokingly), were even more suspicious of her new girth and the chaos in my house. They hardly said a word of greeting to Sharad, and she, in turn, when she brought tea and the cake of the day to the living room, practically dumped the tray on their heads. I, too, was the victim of Sharad's pastry-making frenzy, and waxed fat. And her mistreatment of the child, despite all my warnings, sermons, and scolding, became constant. Through the porthole window that connected my bathroom to the service patio I would hear her talking in a low whisper charged with fury, "If you don't stay still while I comb your hair, I'll slap you!" Then, after an instant of silence, a smack of hand against face and the shriek of the wounded party. The two of them would be worse off without me, I thought, and decided to send Sharad to some cooking classes given by the local nuns, to see if she could channel her talent and, through the classes, find a better job. We agreed that she would leave the little girl with me during the two hours that the weekly classes lasted, but the first time she did this the child cried so much and so hard that I felt a terrifying impulse to hit her myself. And Sharad came home complaining that the nuns wanted to teach her how to make ham sandwiches and spaghetti with cheese.

I went off on another trip, and while I was away Sharad called one of my friends—of them all, the one who trusted Sharad the least. Sharad's mother was ailing with an old, slow cancer, and there was no one in the village to look after her, she explained to my friend. Her two sisters were office cleaners, and if they were absent from their jobs they would be fired. Since I was away, did my friend think that it would bother me if Sharad left for a few days to take care of her mother? My friend said yes, it would—it would be an act of disgraceful ingratitude to someone who had done so much for her if, with so many burglars in the neighborhood, she left the garden and the apartment and everything in it unattended.

When I came back, I found a sparkling clean house and a note. Sharad wrote, in her perfect handwriting, that she couldn't leave her mother alone, and that since she knew she was doing something wrong she preferred to spare me the trouble of having to fire her. Perhaps someday I would be able to forgive her.

I quarrelled bitterly with my friend over the form of Sharad's departure. Although peace returned to my life, a great deal of guilt was left floating in the air, and I didn't know whom else I could attach it to. But the truth is that I was grateful to my friend. ♦

(*Translated, from the Spanish, by Esther Allen.*)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PROFILES

INTO THE CLEAR

Philip Roth puts turbulence in its place.

BY DAVID REMNICK

The summer before last, Philip Roth left his house in rural Connecticut to make one of his periodic raids on Babylon. He visited a few friends, got his hair cut, and, just before heading home, dropped by the offices of *The New Yorker*. Over sandwiches, he talked first about the Yankees, who were enjoying a summer of blissful accomplishment, and then, less happily, about the Clintons, who were not. Over the next year or so, when we met in New York or at the house in Connecticut, Roth proved as funny and as intense as his friends had said he was. "Philip is an unbelievably fierce man," the biographer Judith Thurman said. "His senses are quick and raw—he's the opposite of phlegmatic." When Roth is in the mood, he is a deft mimic (he can do any voice from the febrile ramblings of the sports-radio team Mike and the Mad Dog to the plummy anti-Americanisms of Harold Pinter); he is funny in the way a great Catskills comedian might be were that comedian also possessed of an immense linguistic gift. But on that summer day, while the country seemed to rock between pious concern and giggling fits, Roth was not at all in the mood. His dark, expressive eyes were deadly serious. It was the summer of Monica, a season drenched in a "treacherous and subversive pleasure: the ecstasy of sanctimony," as Roth eventually put it. This was the season of "that depends on what your definition of 'is' is," of the Starr report and oral-sex jokes in the office, and the rage and the accusations and the ceaseless chatter that plumped the ratings. Many of Roth's most persistent themes were coming into play: betrayal, false piety, a flawed man's struggle with the repellent and the libidinous—and now, while he was wondering what Clinton might do, Roth straightened and said, only half in jest, "Maybe he should get on TV and talk frankly about adultery." Maybe he could talk about the complexity of a long and difficult marriage, about frailty, and maybe he'd dare to ask if he is really so alone in his weaknesses. But there was, of course, no political sense in that. Then Roth said, "Why don't you get a bunch of novelists to write about this?" Why cede a national discussion of morality, of men and women, to "Hardball" and "The Beltway Boys"? In the end, however, one of the few writers to say no to the idea was Philip Roth.

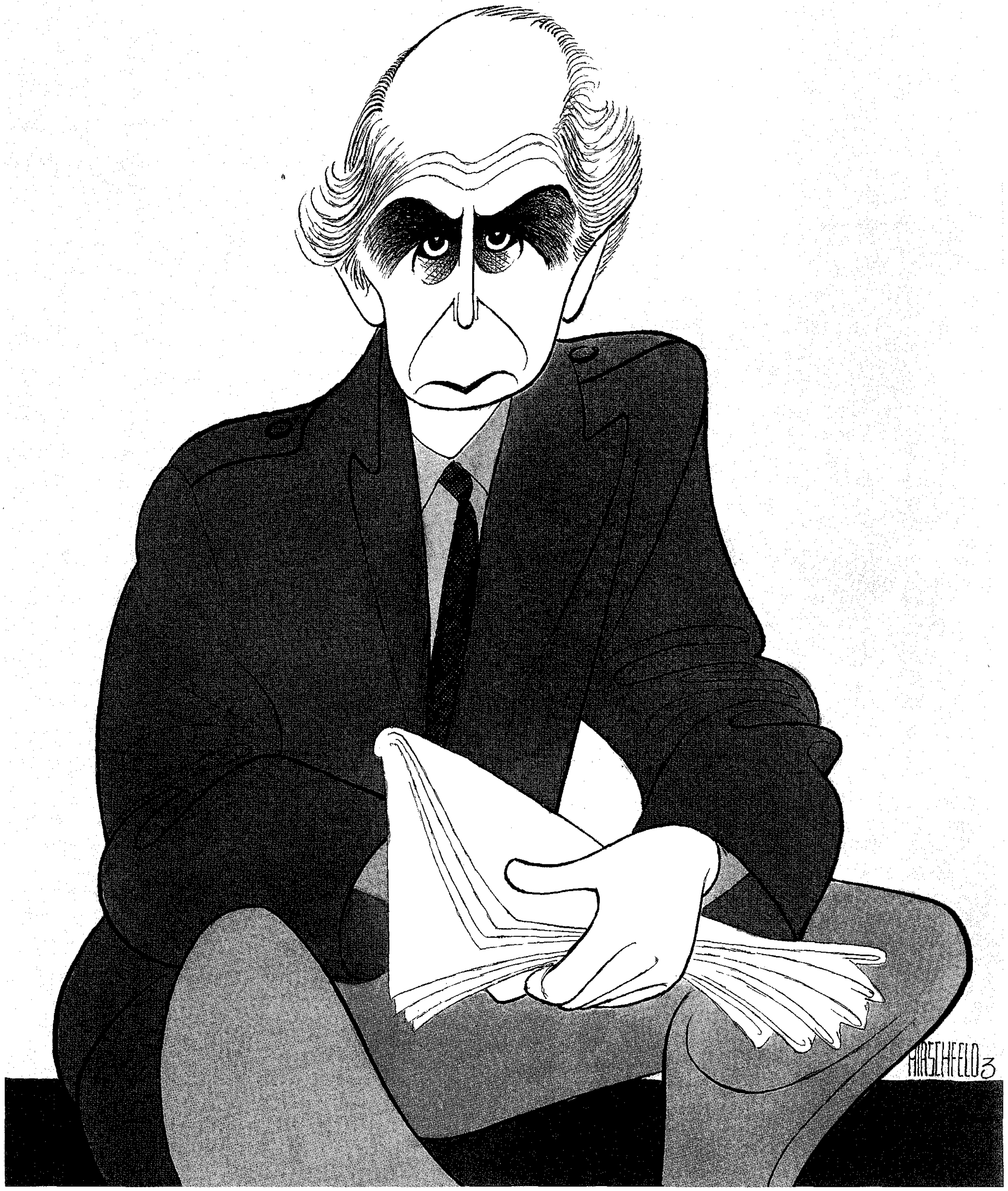
As it turned out, he couldn't spare the time, because he was writing a novel set in the summer of America's "purity binge, when terrorism—which had replaced Communism as the prevailing threat to the country's security—was succeeded by cocksucking." He was writing "The Human Stain," the book that now completes a trilogy on postwar American life. Before it came "American Pastoral," which was set in the Vietnam era, and "I Married a Communist," which took the McCarthy period as its backdrop. Roth is a storyteller who believes in getting quickly to the problem, to a character's predicament, and, in "The Human Stain," in a voice unmistakable for its directness and outrage, he swiftly sketches the moral and political weather in which his characters will move:

> It was the summer in America when the nausea returned, when the joking didn't stop, when the speculation and the theorizing and the hyperbole didn't stop, when the moral obligation to explain to one's children about adult life was abrogated in favor of maintaining in them every illusion about adult life, when the smallness of people was simply crushing, when some kind of demon had been unleashed in the nation and, on both sides, people wondered "Why are we so crazy?", when men and women alike, upon awakening in the morning, discovered that during the night, in a state of sleep that transported them beyond envy or loathing, they had dreamed of the brazenness of Bill Clinton. I myself dreamed of a mammoth banner draped dadaistically like a Christo wrapping from one end of the White House to the other and bearing the legend a human being lives here. It was the summer when—for the billionth time—the jumble, the mayhem, the mess proved itself more subtle than this one's ideology and that one's morality. It was the summer when a president's penis was on everyone's mind, and life, in all its shameless impurity, once again confounded America.

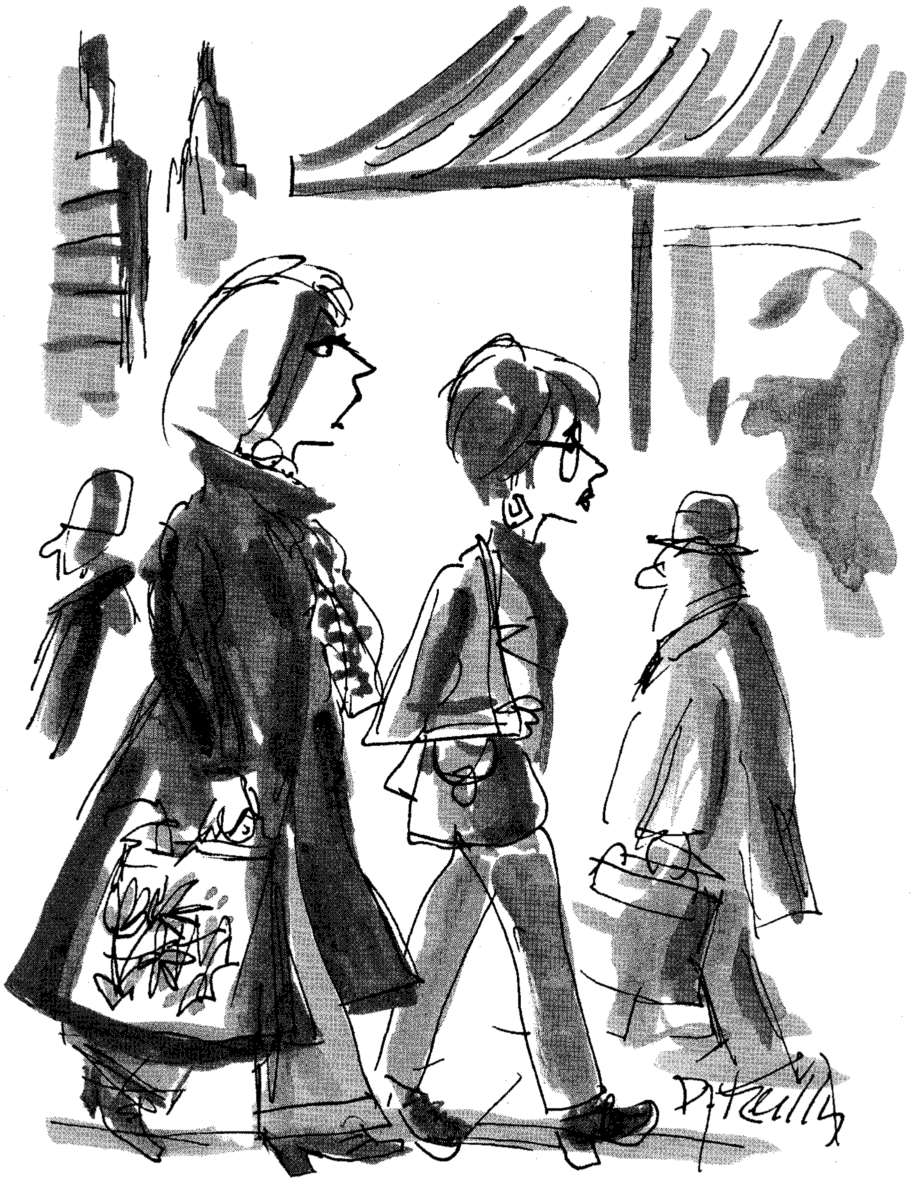
Roth does not attempt a fictional treatment of historical players, as Don DeLillo has done with Lee Harvey Oswald in "Libra" and with J. Edgar Hoover in "Underworld." Rather, in each book of the trilogy, history intrudes without rational explanation into the lives of ordinary people. Many years ago, in the comic experiment of "Our Gang," Roth thrust a grotesquely drawn President into the foreground—his Nixon, Trick E. Dixon, seemed to rise from a swamp of American iniquity—but now, in his late career, he works more in the tradition of Stendhal or Tolstoy, who put their Fabrices and Pierres, not Napoleon, in the foreground. History here is not scenery; history permeates the story, the minds of the characters, and the moral fabric of the book. In "American Pastoral," a Jewish-American Adonis, Seymour (Swede) Levov—a good son, an all-state athlete who inherits his father's glovemaking factory in the ruins of Newark—marries a former Miss New Jersey, and moves to the stone house of his dreams in sylvan Old Rimrock; he loses everything that matters in his life when his daughter Merry "brings the war home" to New Jersey by blowing up the local post office. In "I Married a Communist," a silent-film star, Eve Frame, betrays her husband, a radio actor and idealistic Communist named Ira Ringold, in a marital rage fuelled by the climate of accusation during the McCarthy years. She publishes a memoir (ghostwritten by a gossip columnist) accusing him of spying for the Soviet Union. The book she writes is called "I Married a Communist."

"The Human Stain" portrays a contemporary version of "the indigenous American berserk": the leftish and reac-

AL HIRSCHFELD



"I rule everything else out of my life," Roth, who has published his twenty-fourth book, says of his work. "I didn't always, but I do now."



"We finally hashed out the pre-nup, but I'm never going to speak to him again."

• •

tionary pieties, the pervasive and knowing gossip, the impoverishment of the language, the atmosphere of political and sexual inquisition. The main character, Coleman Silk, is a classics professor with "an autocratic ego," who teaches at the small New England college of Athena. Some of Silk's colleagues resent him because, when he was dean of the faculty, he forced deadwood professors into retirement and was thought to be harsh and insufficiently impressed by the more voguish modes of writing and teaching. These colleagues seize on an opportunity for vengeance when Silk, faced with the continued absence of two students, innocently asks the class while calling roll, "Do they exist or are they spooks?" As it turns out, the missing students are black. It hardly matters that Silk does not know that: for his one-word infraction, for "spooks," he is accused of racism, humiliated in front of his colleagues, and, finally, driven out of his job. The incident is so traumatic, so inexplicable, that when Silk's wife dies he blames the college. The novel's secret, revealed in Chapter 2, is that Silk himself is black. Silk endured a childhood of bigotry and, like Alexander Portnoy before him, he yearned to free himself of the burdens and obligations of the "We," of the group; but, unlike Portnoy, he had the perversity and the will—and the skin tone—to succeed. He trips the historical and ethnic lock. Or he thinks he has. ("Was it the social obstruction that he wished to sidestep? Was he merely being another American and, in the great frontier tradition, accepting the democratic invitation to throw your origins overboard if to do so contributes to the pursuit of happiness?") Silk's "victory," his defection from his race and his own family, now helps to ruin him. As the world takes him for an aging Jewish racist, he is destroyed in a battle he cannot fight by a We he cannot escape.

In these late novels, Roth's narrator, Nathan Zuckerman, is no longer the singular and central presence he was in middle-period novels of the eighties like "The Ghost Writer," "Zuckerman Unbound," "The Anatomy Lesson," and "The Counterlife." Roth has aged Zuckerman considerably (and relieved him of his prostate and potency, for good measure); Zuckerman is more in the background, a recording—and imagining—angel. Once Roth's subject had been the vocation of a writer; now he has turned outward and toward a narrative of American history. He is using the novel as a vehicle for middle-class tragedy in which history happens to, rolls over, even destroys, ordinary men and women: a businessman, an actor, a teacher. Roth is no longer the wunderkind; he is sixty-seven, and the books reflect it. His voice is still charged, an endlessly pliable instrument of comedy and impersonation, but that voice has also darkened, its comedy is deeper, the story it tells is more tragic and painful. You find yourself laughing loudest just at the moment when the abyss widens. The funniest scene in "The Human Stain" comes when a damaged Vietnam veteran tries to overcome his trauma and his hatred of Asians by forcing himself to go with his local support group to a Chinese restaurant ("They count as gooks!"). His mates talk him through the wonton-soup course as if he were in a Mekong Delta firefight:

> Okay, Les, we got it under control. You can let go of the menu now. Les, let go of the menu. First with your right hand.

Silk, a reader steeped in Homer, Sophocles, and Aeschylus, careers toward a familiar Attic fate. After his banishment from Athena College and his wife's death, his one consolation is a consuming affair with Faunia Farley, a much younger woman who works as a janitor and farmhand. For this, too, Silk is condemned, pursued, and destroyed. His most avid accuser is a young professor of French literature named Delphine Roux, who "exposes" Silk's affair with Faunia, sending him an anonymous letter that reads, "Everyone knows you're sexually exploiting an abused, illiterate woman half your age."

The insidious phrase that resonates throughout the book is "everyone knows."

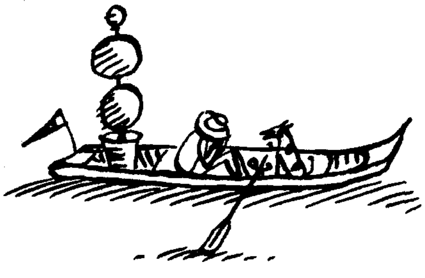
> "Everyone knows" is the invocation of the cliché and the beginning of the banalization of experience, and it's the solemnity and the sense of authority that people have in voicing the cliché that's so insufferable. What we know is that, in an unclichéd way, nobody knows anything. You *can't* know anything. The things you *know* you don't know. Intention? Motive? Consequence? Meaning? All that we don't know is astonishing. Even more astonishing is what passes for knowing.

Philip Roth lives in a town that, strictly speaking, lacks a town. There is a post office, but not much else. He lives in northwest Connecticut, where there are towns like Sharon, Litchfield, and Kent, with restaurants, antique stores, craft stores, libraries, schools, weekend warriors in S.U.V.s. "Up here, there's no beach, there's no town, there's no place for anybody to go, so all you have to do is stay at home," Roth said. We were driving in his Volvo along the banks of the Housatonic River. Suddenly, he went into "Deliverance" mode: "Well, o' course, we got the *rivah heah*, yessir we do!"

We drove through the hills. New York was a dreary mess of cold rain, but here the river was icy, clear as gin, and there was snow in the woods and in the trees. Roth, still playing the hick Virgil, piped up again, saying, "We got a bridge. Would you like to see a *real* bridge? Yessir!" He also made up an entire history of a flood near the bridge. "*Dang* near swamped the *en*-tire town, it did!"

Roth grew up in Newark (urban eastern Jersey is his Yoknapatawpha, his Combray), and he has spent long stretches in Chicago, Manhattan, Iowa City, Rome, and London. His house, a gray, two-story clapboard, was built in 1790. It is not easy to find, which is, for the owner, part of the attraction. Not long ago, Roth bought twenty acres to add to the forty he already owned. Since his separation from the English actress Claire Bloom, seven years ago, he has lived alone. He has very few visitors. In "The Ghost Writer," the older writer Lonoff says of Zuckerman that "an unruly personal life will probably better serve a writer like Nathan than walking in the woods and startling the deer. His work has turbulence—that should be nourished, and not in the woods." No longer. Enough unruliness. If turbulence remains one of Roth's dominant literary tones, "Order in living" is now his credo. "Philip lives like he's at Fort Dix," his friend Ross Miller, who teaches literature at the University of Connecticut, told me. "Everything precise and hospital corners." Roth wakes early and, seven days a week, walks fifty yards or so to a two-room studio. The front room is outfitted with a fireplace, a desk, and a computer set up on a kind of lectern where he can write standing up, the better to preserve a bad back. There are pictures here and there of his family: his father, Herman, who sold insurance for Metropolitan Life; his mother, Bess; his older brother, Sandy, who used to be in advertising and now paints. Most of Roth's books are in the big house, where they run, room after room, in alphabetical order by category.

It was a late-winter morning, and the snow was piled high around the studio. Roth was wearing a blue Shetland sweater, green corduroy pants. Often there is tweed. He dresses like a graduate student of the late fifties. He led me to the back room. There was a team photograph of the 1947 Brooklyn Dodgers. There were free weights, a lifting bench, and an exercise mat. He had quintuple-bypass surgery eleven years ago and is determined to keep in shape. He stays out here all day and into the evening: no telephone, no fax. Nothing gets in. In the late afternoons, he takes long walks, often trying to figure out connections and solve problems in the novel that's possessing him.



"I live alone, there's no one else to be responsible for or to, or to spend time with," Roth said. "My schedule is absolutely my own. Usually, I write all day, but if I want to go back to the studio in the evening, after dinner, I don't have to sit in the living room because someone else has been alone all day. I don't have to sit there and be entertaining or amusing. I go back out and I work for two or three more hours. If I wake up at two in the morning—this happens rarely, but it sometimes happens—and something has dawned on me, I turn the light on and I write in the bedroom. I have these little yellow things all over the place. I read till all hours if I want to. If I get up at five and I can't sleep and I want to work, I go out and I go to work. So I work, I'm on call. I'm like a doctor and it's an emergency room. And I'm the emergency."

Not long before I went up to see Roth in Connecticut, I was reading the text of a conversation he had had with the French philosopher Alain Finkielkraut, and, faced for the millionth time with the "Are you the guy in your novels?" question, Roth had pointed out a passage from Virginia Woolf's 1915 novel "The Voyage Out." A would-be writer says, "All you read a novel for is to see what sort of person the writer is, and, if you know him, which of his friends he's put in. As for the novel itself, the whole conception, the way one's seen the thing, felt about it, made it stand in relation to other things, not one in a million cares for that."

Considering the extent to which Roth has used his own life and character in fiction (in that way he is similar to Céline, Genet, and Gombrowicz), and even considering the degree to which he has been vacuumed up occasionally as an object of gossip, there's no mystery why he might like that passage of Woolf's. One night, I went with Roth to Columbia University, where he met with a graduate seminar led by his friend the novelist David Plante. They were reading "Operation Shylock," in which the main character, "Philip Roth," arrives in Israel in the year of the Demjanjuk trial only to be tortured by a double, an imp of the perverse, named Pipik, who goes around Jerusalem announcing that he, in fact, is Roth. Sooner or later, one of the Columbia students asked Roth if the story was "true."

No, it isn't, he said gently: "None of this seems like autobiography to me. It seems like fiction. Not to say that one doesn't draw on one's experiences, but what counts is the use you make of it." Life is the amorphous thing and, to the artist, it feels nothing like art, the *made* thing, the considered thing. Both in life and in "Operation Shylock," Roth endured a mental breakdown after taking the tranquillizer Halcion, but whereas in life the breakdown was to no good purpose, except to be endured, in the novel the breakdown works to heighten the narrator's violent and confused encounter with Israel. Roth went through this explanation patiently, but when the subject finally turned to the made thing, to the novel, he brightened. "Every Jewish exigency, pain, and antagonism flows through 'Roth,'" he told the students. "In 'Finnegan's Wake,' there is the character Humphrey C. Earwicker, who sleeps with absolutely everything flowing through his mind, and Joyce uses the initials H.C.E. as 'Here Comes Everybody.' Well, in 'Operation Shylock' you have 'Here Comes Everybody Jewish.' Leon Klinghoffer. Jonathan Pollard. Menachem Begin. Meir Kahane. All these names were passing through the collective Jewish brain at the time, and I wanted to get inside the Jewish mind."

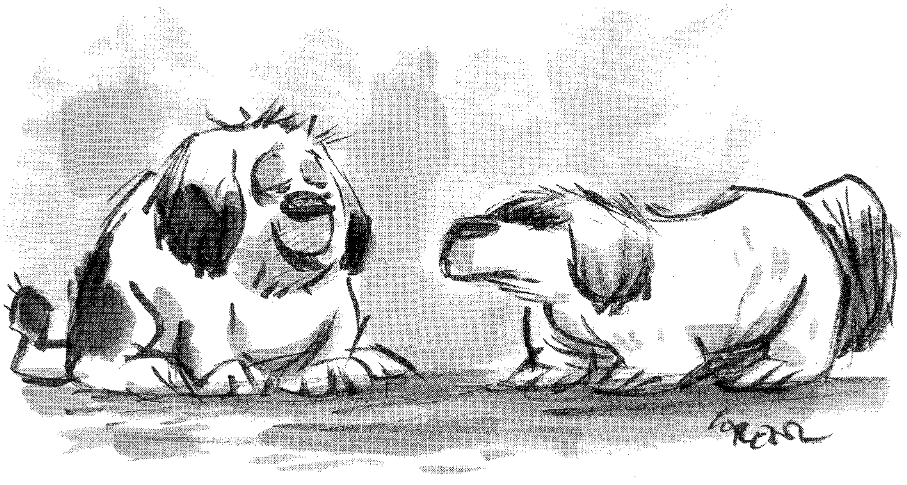
Roth's career began, forty-three years ago, with much the same project: writing about Jews. And, as a result of his fearlessness and bravado, of his aversion to a pious literature of virtue and victimhood, his public reputation began with scandal, distortion, and a wound. It was a modest scandal at first, and then became the sort of full-scale storm that may well be looked back upon as a curious relic.

Years later, Saul Bellow remarked that critics often thought of him, Bernard Malamud, and Roth as a small company of Jewish haberdashers, "the Hart, Schaffner & Marx" of American letters. But influence doesn't work in the mimetic or genetic way most critics would have it. Roth, as an undergraduate at Bucknell and later as a graduate student at the University of Chicago, did indeed read both Malamud and Bellow. In Malamud he saw "harsh fables" about urban immigrants; but they were fables about Roth's Yiddish-speaking elders, not his contemporaries, and they were written in the minor key of immigration rather than in the broad C major of full-fledged American immersion. In Bellow, particularly in "The Adventures of Augie March," Roth sensed something more congenial, more liberating, a narrator with an aggressive native voice, far more American than immigrant Jew. The novel opens with a declaration of citizenship, not nostalgia: "I am an American, Chicago born." For Roth, "the spine of American literature" in the twentieth century is Faulkner and Bellow, and although Roth has never written *like* Bellow—no reader would ever mistake those two voices for one another—it was "Augie March" that gave him the permission to cut loose, to write not of a victimized European generation living in the shadowland of immigration but of a younger generation steeped in America, in its freedom and talk, its energies and superabundance.

For Roth, growing up in New Jersey in the forties was never about getting beaten up, about pogroms or tortured shopkeepers. "My experience," Roth said, "had been about our aggression, our going out into Newark, three or four of us, wandering the streets at night, shooting crap in back of the high school with flashlights, girls, going after your date to this gathering place called Syd's on Chancellor Avenue and telling your sex stories. It was that verbal robustness, people talking, being terrifically funny, playing ball, competing, the energy flowing out. . . . Appetite. Maybe that's the word. It was the appetites that were aggressive."

Then, in March, 1959, *The New Yorker* published "Defender of the Faith," a story about a Jewish recruit at an Army base in Missouri at the end of the Second World War, who tries to wangle special treatment out of his Jewish sergeant. The germ of the scandal lay, first, in the fact that the recruit was a devious kid playing on the guilty fellow-feeling of his officer and, second, in the fact that the story wasn't being published in a Jewish magazine or in a quarterly. Roth had certainly published stories about Jews before, including "You Can't Tell a Man by the Song He Sings," in *Commentary,* and "The Conversion of the Jews," in the *Paris Review,* but those were relatively small journals for highbrow readers who were used to far more radical ideas and jokes. *The New Yorker* was something different. The magazine published many Jewish writers, including J. D. Salinger, S. J. Perelman, and Irwin Shaw; Isaac Bashevis Singer's stories, translated from the Yiddish, eventually became a mainstay; but the aura of the place in 1959 was more Bronxville than Upper West Side.

Roth did not anticipate anything other than the simple pleasures of early publication. He was living in a two-room basement apartment in the East Village, and, on the day the magazine was to appear, he kept going up to his neighborhood kiosk asking, "You got it yet?" When it finally came in, he bought four copies.



"I've been getting in touch with the puppy in me."

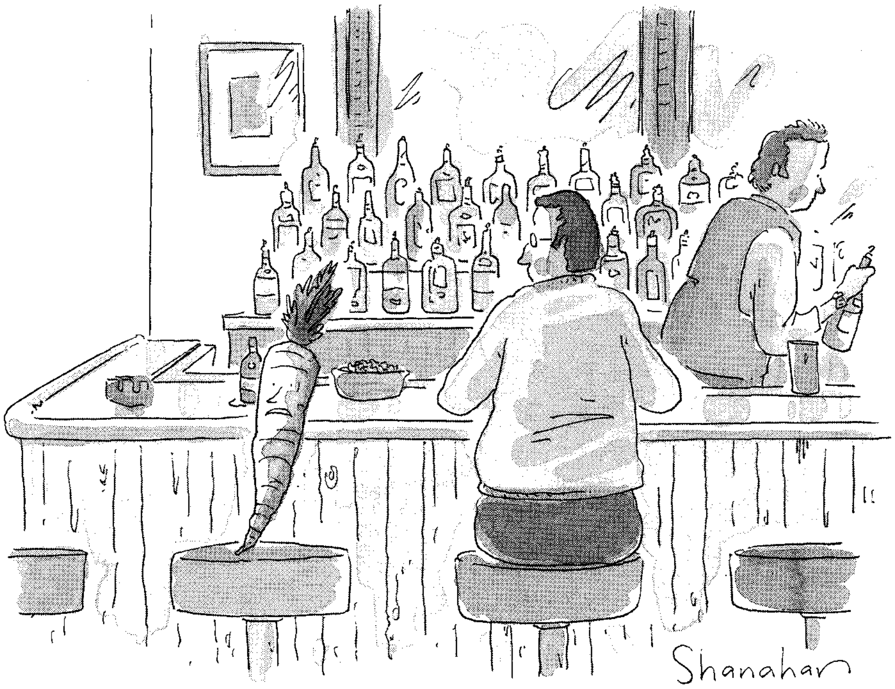
"I'd open it and close it, and look at it from here and look at it from there, and read it, read it and then the words would just blast out of my mind and it all made no sense. It was terribly thrilling." A few days later, his editor at the magazine, Rachel MacKenzie, called, saying they were getting a lot of letters, many of them angry. Then came a call from the Anti-Defamation League, and then word that rabbis around the city and beyond were decrying the story in their sermons. His sin was simple: he'd had the audacity to write about a Jewish kid as being flawed, as being aggressive and conniving, as being interested in money—and he had done it in a national magazine. He had violated the tribal code on Jewish self-exposure: Not in front of the goyim! The letters poured in, both to the magazine and to Roth:

> Mr. Roth:
>
> With your one story, "Defender of the Faith," you have done as much harm as all the organized anti-Semitic organizations have done to make people believe that all Jews are cheats, liars, connivers. Your one story makes people—the general public—forget all the Jews who have lived, all the Jewish boys who served well in the armed services, all the Jews who live honest hard lives the world over.

One letter came to the Anti-Defamation League from a prominent rabbi, reading, "What is being done to silence this man? Medieval Jews would have known what to do with him."

Roth was not so much frightened by the hostility as he was engaged. He was not a young twenty-six; he was ambitious, he'd travelled, he'd taught at the University of Chicago, he'd been in the Army. There was something exciting (at first) about getting a reaction to his stories, a reaction out in the world, beyond his circle of friends and editors.

"I was not in flight from it and I wanted to find out who these people were," Roth told me. "Suddenly, I was the center of controversy with these rabbis, all of whom were my seniors by thirty years, and who had constituencies, who had congregations."



"Then I said, 'So what does a lesbian vegan Wiccan do for fun?'"

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For a while, the scandal seemed mild, manageable. "Goodbye, Columbus," a collection that included "Defender of the Faith," won the National Book Award in 1960, and Roth was invited to speak to campus Hillel groups and synagogue congregations. Usually, the questions were polite, easily absorbed. But then, in 1962, Roth, while teaching in Iowa, was invited to be on a panel at Yeshiva University, the academic bastion of Orthodox Judaism, in Washington Heights. "I felt that I was obliged to do this, I wanted to do it, and it seemed to me tied up with writing," Roth said. "I had written something that provoked this response and I had to be responsible to it. I don't know how at twenty-eight, twenty-nine, thirty I could have responded any differently. Now I might respond to it by just letting the fiction speak for itself."

The panel was called "The Crisis of Conscience in Minority Writers of Fiction," and it also included Pietro di Donato, the author of a proletarian novel called "Christ in Concrete," and Ralph Ellison, whose 1952 novel, "Invisible Man," was starting to come under attack from radical black nationalists. That night at Yeshiva was a slaughter. The students practically ignored the outsiders, Ellison and di Donato, and focussed on their own, on Roth. They battered him, asking him over and over, in one form or another, "Mr. Roth, would you write the same stories if you lived in Nazi Germany?" (This is much the same question that the imperious Newark judge Leopold Wapter asks Nathan Zuckerman, almost two decades later, in "The Ghost Writer": "Can you honestly say that there is anything in your short story that would not warm the heart of a Julius Streicher or a Joseph Goebbels?") Over and over, Roth answered, "But we live in the *opposite* of Nazi Germany!" And he got nowhere.

"Finally, in about the eleventh round," Roth recalled, "when Ralph had a feeling I couldn't come out for the twelfth, he came out and said, 'What's going on here?' Ellison said that he had gotten mail from black readers furious with him for having depicted incest in a black family—a sharecropper who sleeps with his daughter." A typical letter asked how he could write such a scene while the civil-rights movement was just starting. Ellison told the audience his only answer was to insist on a novelist's independence: "I am not a cog in the machinery of civil-rights legislation."

The Yeshiva students listened politely to Ellison—and then went right back to pummelling Roth. After the program ended and Roth was trying to leave the stage, the students who had been most antagonistic gathered around him, surrounded him, shouting. One even shook his fist, crying out, "You were brought up on anti-Semitic literature!"

"Yes?" Roth said. "And what is that?"

"English literature," came the answer. "English literature is anti-Semitic literature!"

Later that night, at a post mortem at the Stage Delicatessen, Roth looked up from his pastrami sandwich and told his friends, "I'll never write about Jews again."

In fact, Roth's next two books, "Letting Go" and "When She Was Good," were his least antic, his least Jewish. But that restraint did not satisfy him, either. The incident at Yeshiva, the urge to speak with a voice that came more from Newark than from the graduate-school seminar rooms, the desire to write in a prose as energized as the sixties, led him toward "Portnoy's Complaint." This time, there was no innocence, no accident involved. He set out thinking, You want outrage? I'll give you outrage!

The gestation period of "Portnoy's Complaint" was long, complicated, and chaotic. Its first incarnation was a two-hundred-page riff called "The Jewboy," based on a Newark childhood. Then came the draft of a play called "The Nice Jewish Boy"—"in its way a less comforting, more aggressive 'Abie's Irish Rose,' " Roth called it—that was read as a workshop exercise at the American Place Theatre in 1964, with Dustin Hoffman in the main role. Then, after finishing "When She Was Good," in 1966, Roth wrote a long monologue "beside which the fetid indiscretions of 'Portnoy's Complaint' would appear to be the work of Louisa May Alcott." The piece featured a slide-show lecture about the intimate organs of the famous and a lengthy disquisition on the subject of adolescent masturbation. There came yet another manuscript, this one titled "Portrait of the Artist," which focussed, in part, on a Jewish family, the Portnoys. Finally, there was a short story, "A Jewish Patient Begins His Analysis"; the breakthrough of the story was setting it in the office of a psychoanalyst—the setting, eventually, for "Portnoy's Complaint." This gave the rage and obscenity, the performance-piece comedy, a literary frame, a context for unfiltered confession.

"I needed permission, and permission came with casting the book as a psychoanalytic confession," Roth told me. "The theatre of the analyst's office says the rule here is that there are no rules, the rule here is no inhibitions, the rule here is no restraint, the rule here is no decorum." The novel that resulted had little to do with Vietnam, civil rights, or any other political question of the sixties, but in its openness, in its unhinged comedy and freedom, it was a book of its time. Alexander Portnoy tells all to his shrink, all of it: the joy of his Jewish neighborhood in Newark—

> White bread, rye bread,
> Pumpernickel, challah,
> All those for Weequahic,
> Stand up and hollah!

—the passionate grip of his overweening goddess-mother, Sophie, "who could accomplish anything. . . . She could make jello, for instance, with sliced peaches *hanging* in it, just *suspended* there, in defiance of the law of gravity"; the bathroom agonies of his life-weary father, who chews vainly on Ex-Lax and dried fruit "by the pound bag" and falls asleep on the toilet, a man who, "in his retirement now, has really only one subject into which he can sink his teeth, the New Jersey Turnpike." Portnoy confesses his adventures in masturbation: ejaculating into a cored apple, into a baseball glove, into a Mounds-bar wrapper, into an empty milk bottle, into "Lenore Lapidus's big fat red-hot brassiere!," and (in perhaps the most famous solo performance since Lindbergh crossed the Atlantic) into a piece of refrigerated liver, the Portnoy family dinner. Portnoy yearns to be good, to lash himself to the mast of respectability, and at the same time rages against all the ropes that would bind him there—family, religion, taboos:

> Look, am I exaggerating to think it's practically miraculous that I'm ambulatory? The hysteria and the superstition! The watch-its and the be-carefuls! You mustn't do this, you can't do that—hold it! don't! you're breaking an important law! *What* law! *Whose* law! They might as well have had plates in their lips and rings through their noses and painted themselves blue for all the human sense they made! Oh, and the *milchiks* and *flaishiks* besides, all those *meshuggeneh* rules and regulations on top of their own private craziness! It's a family joke that when I was a tiny child I turned from the window out of which I was watching a snowstorm, and hopefully asked, "Momma, do we believe in winter?" Do you get what I'm *saying?* I was raised by Hottentots and

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AT THE GALLERIES

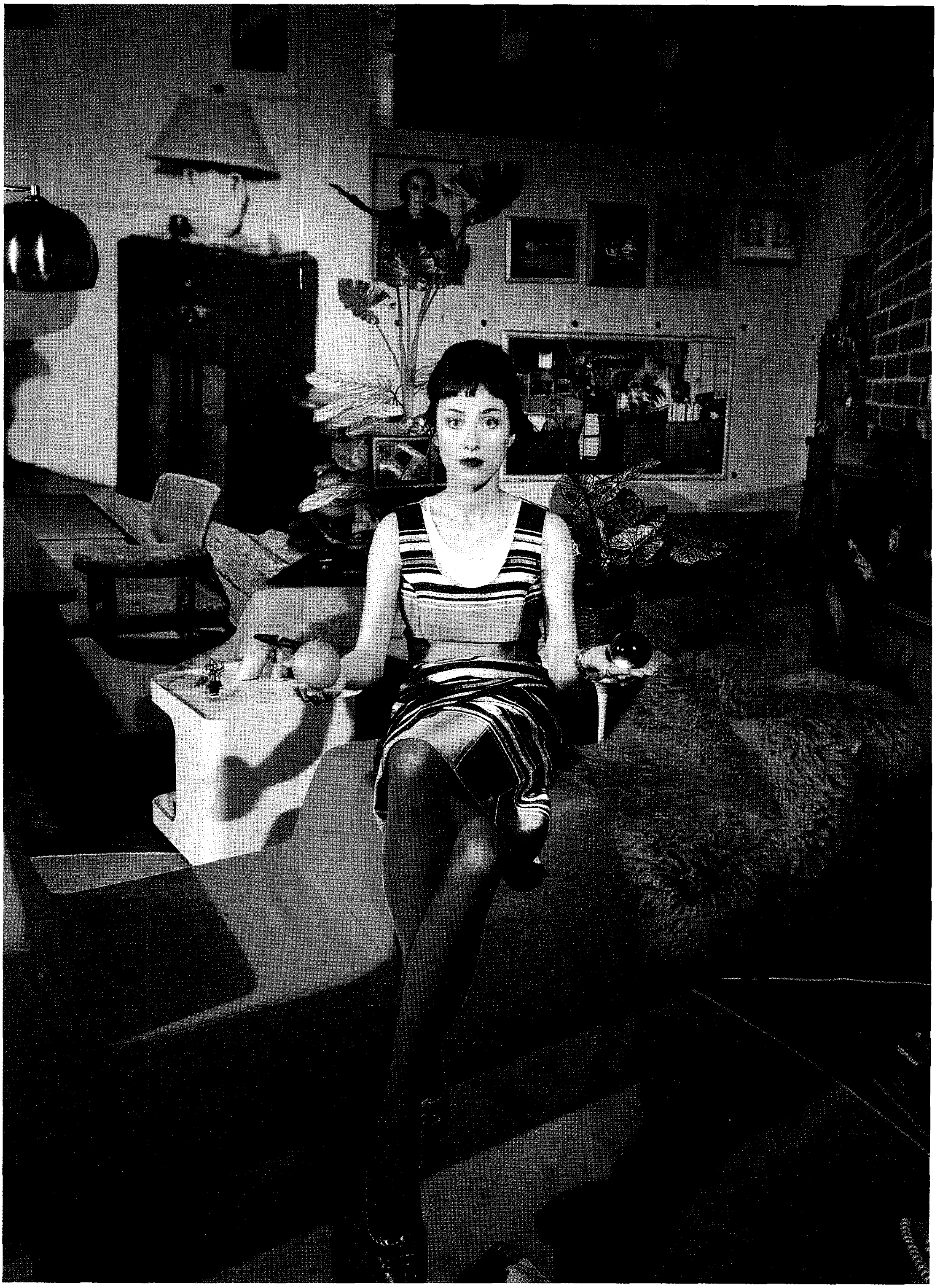
LADY VIDEO

Her name, Pipilotti Rist, is the perfect plastic-punk kiss-off: it's so irresistibly dumb it dares you to dismiss her. Almost twenty years ago, she spliced it together out of childhood nicknames (Lotte, Pippi), but the Swiss video-installation artist, whose American solo début runs through May at Luhring Augustine, has long since grown into both the charm and the deceptiveness of her identity. "Perhaps it sounds a bit—what is the English—infantile? And this gives people the possibility to put their dream in that."

Naturally, she gives her pieces great, portentously goofy titles, too. Here she sits in "Himalaya's Sister's Living Room," a fun house of an installation in which she's hidden seven video projections among the clutter of comfy design landmarks. Lean over the takeout boxes on the Eames-like dinette set, for example, and there's a girl biking by in flowery tights. Or kneel down near the stack of coffee-table books to watch a grainy picnicking scene that seems to fall halfway between a home movie and Seurat's "La Grande Jatte."

Rist likes to use what she calls "low-tech, ladylike things"—surveillance cameras and camcorders instead of the professional equipment it takes a brute to lug. Then she'll fool around for hours until she discovers "this moment that comes close to inner feeling." The results can be funny and slick: in the back gallery, a floor-to-ceiling projection shows Rist floating through a grocery store; on her forehead appear dodgy pinhole images of her friends running naked through a forest. But it's hard to miss the beautiful, almost handmade quality of these gee-whiz effects. "You put in a thousand hours," she says. "It's always like a gift, a gift of time."

—*Kevin Conley*



Pipilotti Rist, perching on a Björn Dahlström love seat in her installation at Luhring Augustine. Photograph by Jessica Wynne.

"Hi, I'm your court-appointed lawyer—whoa! Don't tell me you've been executed already."

• •

> Zulus! I couldn't even contemplate drinking a glass of milk with my salami sandwich without giving serious offense to God Almighty. Imagine then what my conscience gave me for all that jerking off!

"Portnoy's Complaint" was a best-seller (more than four hundred thousand copies sold when it came out, in 1969) and became as much a part of the popular culture that year as Woodstock and the Mets. Roth had crossed over; he had already gained a serious reputation, but now he also showed that he could shift easily from low burlesque to high drama. And yet there were repercussions that would haunt him for decades. Not only did "Portnoy" 's success vault Roth into the bizarre and disorienting realm of American celebrity (the gossip columnist Leonard Lyons wrote that he was dating Barbra Streisand; they'd never met); it also conflated the character Portnoy and his author to such a degree that anyone—anyone!—felt free to identify Roth as a kind of erotomaniac who prowled Broadway looking for shiksas. Jacqueline Susann went on the "Tonight Show" to promote "The Love Machine" that year and told Johnny Carson that she might like to meet Philip Roth, her rival for the No. 1 spot on the *Times* best-seller list, "But I wouldn't want to shake his hand." Jacqueline Susann! The intimacy of Roth's voice seemed to invite this sort of thing. It still does. To this day, on Broadway, people will stop him to make a joke about masturbation or delicatessens.

Even Roth's parents, who collected all the reviews and clippings as trophies, had to endure the sneers of people around them who assumed they were the models for the Portnoys and that Philip was somehow anti-Semitic. "Our folks were wonderful about it," Roth's brother, Sandy, told me. "Their friends were not great readers, they just repeated crap that other people said."

The book was, in the main, badly read. Of course, "Portnoy" was hilarious and profane, but many of Roth's critics and readers seemed to miss the pain in the comedy, the violence done, say, when a father betrays his son and pays the boy's Gentile girlfriend a hundred dollars to get lost, and then ends up in a horrible fight in the basement with his son. What people missed, too, was Portnoy's paradox, his desire to defect—to be free of the suffocating We, the family, the congregation, the ethos of victimhood and virtue, all of it—and, at the same time, the equally powerful desire to listen to his mother, to cut off his affair with his lover, Monkey, to be a good boy, to pay proper respect to history, to be a good son, a good Jew:

> Oh, to be a center fielder, a center fielder—and nothing more!
>
> But I am something more, or so they tell me. A Jew....Can't you see, my dear parents, from whose loins I somehow leaped, that such thinking is a trifle barbaric? That all you are expressing is your *fear*? The very first distinction I learned from you, I'm sure, was not night and day, or hot and cold, but *goyische* and Jewish! But now it turns out, my dear parents, relatives, and assembled friends, who have gathered here to celebrate the occasion of my bar mitzvah, it turns out, you schmucks! you narrow-minded schmucks!—oh, how I hate you for your Jewish narrow-minded minds!... Jew Jew Jew Jew Jew Jew! It is coming out of my ears already, the saga of the suffering Jews! Do me a favor, my people, and stick your suffering heritage up your suffering ass—*I happen also to be a human being!*

Perhaps it's hard now to imagine how transgressive this all was thirty years ago, hard to picture the outrage, so much more intense than what had been aroused by "Defender of the Faith." To this day, ethnic fiction too often asks to be loved purely for its affiliations, its purity and virtue; this was a voice in *struggle* with its affiliations, in rebellion against purity. It did not ask to be loved, and it often wasn't. Certainly not by the ethnic leadership. Once more, rabbis took to the pulpit. The reaction among many Jewish intellectuals was as hysterical as it had been in the Hadassahs of suburbia. One of the most censorious essays came from Gershom Scholem, the distinguished Jewish scholar and the author of definitive studies of Jewish mysticism. Scholem wrote about "Portnoy" in the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*, branding it a "revolting book," worse than the "Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion" because it provided anti-Semites with "authentic evidence" of Jewish perfidy:

> This is the book for which all anti-Semites have been praying. I daresay that with the next turn of history, not long to be delayed, this book will make all of us defendants at court. We will pay the price, not the author.... I wonder what price k'lal yisrael [the world Jewish community]—and there is such an entity in the eyes of the Gentiles—is going to pay for this book. Woe to us on that day of reckoning!

Saul Bellow, who first met Roth at the University of Chicago in the fifties, told me, "Gershom Scholem was a Jew who left Germany and settled in Jerusalem and was likely to draw a parallel between the United States and the Germany he left behind, and he saw symptoms of this terrible problem in Philip's work and in me as well. He was mistaken. These things didn't mean what he thought they did. I think Scholem had in mind Nazi Germany and not the United States."

Less understandable, and far more wounding to Roth, was an assault by Irving Howe, in *Commentary* in 1972. Howe was not an émigré. As an eminence in both literary journalism and left-wing politics, he knew the American context as well as anyone, and yet, after showing early support, he now declared Roth "an exceedingly joyless writer" whose "unfocused hostility" is the "ground-note" of his sensibility. He attacked not merely "Portnoy" but its author as well, warning of a "deficiency" in Roth's character, an emptiness beneath the "comedian's shuffle and patter."

"The cruelest thing anyone can do with 'Portnoy's Complaint' is to read it twice," Howe wrote. "An assemblage of gags strung onto the outcry of an analytic patient, the book thrives best on casual responses; it demands little more from the reader than a nightclub performer demands." In an insult sure to resound with the *Commentary* audience, he compared Roth not to Aristophanes or Swift but to Harry Golden: "Between 'Portnoy's Complaint' and 'For Two Cents Plain' there is finally no great difference of sensibility." In the very magazine that had helped launch Roth's career, Howe, the respected elder, was undermining Roth's seriousness, his authenticity. (This was the same Howe who excoriated Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin, in a 1963 essay in *Dissent,* for not being, in essence, sufficiently black.)

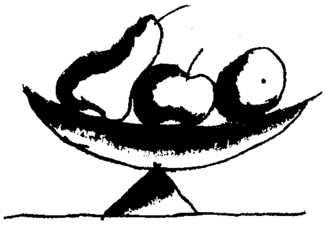
Howe's review in *Commentary* represented a terrible rebuke for Roth, and it gnawed at him for years. In "The Anatomy Lesson" (1983), Roth transforms himself into Zuckerman and Howe into the insufferable Milton Appel, and, with barely concealed rage, writes that Appel "had unleashed an attack upon Zuckerman's career that made MacDuff's assault upon Macbeth look almost lackadaisical." To this day, Roth keeps on his wall a drawing made for him by his friend the artist Philip Guston, depicting a stabbed and bleeding critic, a pipe dangling from his lips.

And yet Scholem, Howe, and the damning rabbis were not alone. "Portnoy" was a difficult book even for the most sympathetic reader. At the time, a strong supporter like Bellow could not fully embrace the comic extravagance of Roth's novel.

"I didn't get much of a kick out of 'Portnoy's Complaint' back then," Bellow said. "Maybe there was a shred or two of respectability still clinging to me then. I wasn't *down* on it. I was amused, but it wasn't pure joy.

"I'm not sure Philip always realizes that he is being outrageous," Bellow went on. "He feels a writer should provoke—and he should, if that is the way he is inclined—but he can't expect to evade the results of this provocation. Philip is a radical. He feels he should treat the bizarre as if it were perfectly normal."

Roth told me he was never naïve about the provocative nature of some of his books, but the attacks, along with the freakish feel of celebrity, helped drive him out of the city and to an increasingly solitary way of living.



"I felt visible and exposed," he said. "Somebody who had just read 'Portnoy's Complaint' would come up to me and say, 'I don't eat liver anymore.' It was funny the first seven thousand times I heard it." For a while, Roth lived in Woodstock, New York, near Philip Guston, and then he bought the house in Connecticut, and he has lived there, for the most part, ever since.

Working in Connecticut, and often for part of each year in London in the late seventies and eighties, Roth became a consistently prolific and evolving writer. The book-chat cliché that dismissed him as a gifted comedian who had then dived headlong into his own pool of Narcissus was always a vulgarity, on the same low level as dismissing Updike as a preternaturally skillful writer of surfaces or, for that matter, Dickens as a writer of potboilers. Many novelists are read dismissively, but it's been doubly so for Roth.

There are welcome surprises sometimes. Last year, Roth received an invitation to an all-Roth literary conference in Aix-en-Provence. He had not been to Europe for a decade, and he was reluctant to interrupt his work for even a few days. His friends had to convince him that basking in the Mediterranean sun and meeting with a group of serious readers of his books hardly amounted to a sentence to Elba. Once Roth was in Aix, he was delighted: his books were for sale and, evidently, read; the mayor gave him the key to the city; he was celebrated everywhere he went; on the main roads and side streets of Aix, red banners bearing his portrait and the words "The Roth Explosion" flapped in the breeze—a detail that, as Roth told his French hosts, "has made me understand a little about what it must have been like to be Chairman Mao."

Sitting each day in the audience of a large auditorium, Roth heard panels of American and French critics discuss his later novels; from the stage, he led two master classes. The classes were more like literary press conferences and the questioners were, in the main, local graduate students, young men and women educated to a crisp in the great French fryer of Continental literary education, with its bubbling Derridian rhetoric and dubious wordplay. Roth, who learned to read at Bucknell and the University of Chicago a half century ago, was dumbstruck as he was pressed on the significance of his characters' names: Seymour (Swede) Levov, it means "love"? Lev? Lion? And, Seymour. It means See-more? See-*more*, yes? And what about Merry? Is she the Mary? Christ's Mary? There were questions about numerology, about the "tripartite nature" of "American Pastoral": its three generations, its three parts, its three family members. Then the subject turned to the Talmud and Hebrew philology (Roth's Jewish learning is modest, and he speaks Catskills Yiddish and no Hebrew). On all these matters, Roth suggested to the French students that perhaps they were reading with a "subtlety that is misplaced." He hoped instead that they would begin to think of "American Pastoral" as a book less about the mysteries of its names than as one about the costs of a revolutionary period in American life, about "the uncontrollability of real things," the inability to explain random events and catastrophes in a good man's life.

Later, when I asked Roth about such readings, he laughed, and said, "It's like baseball. Suppose you and I went up to the ballpark together, and there's a guy next to us with his kid. And he was saying, 'Now, what I want you to do is watch the scoreboard. Stop watching the field. Just watch what happens when the numbers change on the scoreboard. Isn't that great? Now, do you see what just happened up there? Did you see what happened? Why did that happen?' And you say, 'That guy is crazy.' But the kid imbibes it and he goes home and he's asked, 'How was the game?' And he says, 'Great! The scoreboard changed thirty-two times and Daddy said last game it changed only fourteen times and the home team last time changed more times than the other team. It was really great! We had hot dogs and we stood up at one point to stretch and we went home.' Is that politicizing the baseball game? Is that theorizing the baseball game? No, it's having not the foggiest idea in the world what baseball is."

Not long ago, Norman Manea, a Romanian émigré writer and one of Roth's closest friends, invited Roth to speak to a class at Bard College about his 1995 novel "Sabbath's Theater," an incendiary portrait of Mickey Sabbath, a broke and despairing Falstaff who refuses every social propriety or sexual regulation. Manea feared that his students would attack Roth for the usual reasons: that his portrayal of women was insufficiently "sympathetic," that his ideas about sex were retrograde, that the hero Mickey Sabbath was neither heroic nor congenial, that the book failed the compassion test. "Of course, the day before, I tried to prepare them, to show them that there were some women who are this way, others another, and that Drenka, the main female character, is equal to Sabbath in her erotic proclivities," Manea said. "These are women, after all, not cats. They are different. I had to explain that to demand that everyone female be nice is just like when I was in Romania and they said that all the characters who were workers had to be nice workers." As a way of showing that the rude and the obscene are not new to Western literature, Roth read from Rabelais. That seemed to work. At a subsequent session, on "I Married a Communist," things did not go so well. Near the end of that class, Roth read to the students from an account of the trial of Andrei Sinyavsky and Yuli Daniel, two of the leading literary dissidents in the Brezhnev period. In the transcript, the judge demands to know from Daniel why he writes such unpleasant things about "the Soviet people." Daniel replies that these are not "the Soviet people" but, rather, characters in his book. "Even in the writers' union," Daniel says, "they don't ask that we write only about nice people."

But Roth's tactic only seemed to make matters worse.

"Philip could not make them see the novel from a more literary point of view and not politicize everything," Manea said.

Although it has been many years since some of the grandees in the Jewish establishment attacked Roth, it is still a commonplace to hear that his novels never paint a rounded portrait of a female character, that they are somehow "hostile" to women. At one point in "Sabbath's Theater," Roth lampoons such reductive thinking when he quotes from a young woman's notes in a college lecture course. Of Yeats's poem "Meru," she writes, "Class criticized poem for its lack of a woman's perspective. Note unconscious gender privileging—*his* terror, *his* glory, *his* (phallic) monuments."

Roth's friend the Irish novelist Edna O'Brien told me, "As regards women, Philip has been mistakenly accused of not liking or understanding them. That's tosh! Take Faunia, his most recent heroine: she is generous, funny, astute, and, like many a woman, castigated for her sexual robustness. She stands in extreme and salutary contrast to Monica Lewinsky, whose come-hither carried the hidden resolve of betrayal."

Roth does not like to talk much about these things, for fear of arousing more argument and hostility. His opinion about the state of reading, in the academy and in the culture generally, seems now to be what makes him most unhappy.

"Every year, seventy readers die and only two are replaced. That's a very easy way to visualize it," Roth said. By "readers," he said, he means people who read serious books seriously and consistently. The evidence "is everywhere that the literary era has come to an end," he said. "The evidence is the culture, the evidence is the society, the evidence is the screen, the progression from the movie screen to the television screen to the computer. There's only so much time, so much room, and there are only so many habits of mind that can determine how people use the free time they have. Literature takes a habit of mind that has disappeared. It requires silence, some form of isolation, and sustained concentration in the presence of an enigmatic thing. It is difficult to come to grips with a mature, intelligent, adult novel. It is difficult to know what to make of literature. That's why I say stupid things are said about it, because unless people are well trained they don't know quite what to make of it."

We were sitting at Roth's kitchen table, and I could see that he was eager to change the subject. We'd talked about this before, and it made him anxious; he sensed that saying these things would make him seem crotchety and sour, hostile to his audience. But I said, "Go further."

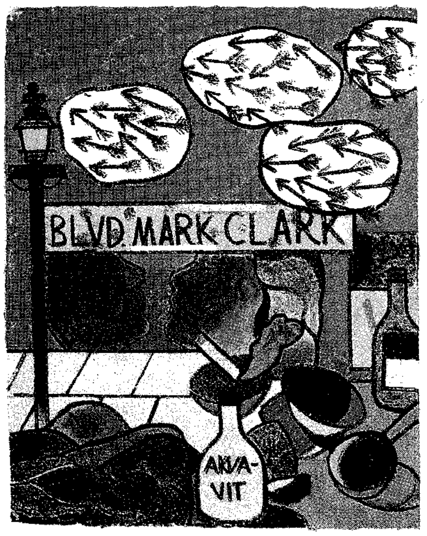
Roth straightened in his chair. "Go further? You wanna know? All right. Well, I think that the whole effort of certainly the first half of the twentieth century, the whole intellectual and artistic effort, was to see *behind* things, and that is no longer of interest. To explore consciousness was the great mission of the first half of the century—whether we're talking about Freud or Joyce, whether we're talking about the Surrealists or Kafka or Marx, or Frazer or Proust or whoever. The whole effort was to expand our sense of what consciousness is and what lies behind it. It's no longer of interest. I think that what we're seeing is the narrowing of consciousness. I read the other day in a newspaper that I occasionally see that Freud was a kind of charlatan or something worse. This great, tragic poet, our Sophocles! The writer is just not of interest to the public as somebody who may have an inroad into consciousness. The writer is only interesting in terms of how much money did he get and what's the scandal. That's all they're interested in. Why? Because the other stuff is useless, they don't want it. There has always been a debate over what literature is and what's it for, because it is a mysterious thing, and the mysterious side of existence, certainly for secular people, is not an urgent problem.

"I'm not a good enough student of whatever you have to be a student of to figure this out, but one gets the sense—and not just on the basis of the death of reading—that the American branch of the species is being retooled. I see the death of reading as just an aspect of this. I have to see it that way, otherwise it's just cultural whining, and cultural whining is boring. It's an aspect of some great shift that's occurred—been going on for a while—in that which interests the most intelligent members of American society."

In this period of Roth's maturity, his book sales have been modest, ranging between thirty and forty-five thousand in hardcover. The "Portnoy" days are long past. But this, he said, is hardly the point: "It doesn't make any difference really if a hundred thousand read the book or ten thousand or five thousand, frankly. Five thousand people is a lot of people. And, as a friend of mine said about five thousand readers, 'If they came through your living room one at a time they'd leave you in tears.'

"So when I talk of the death of read-

TAKES



RICHARD MERKIN

We defended the city as best we could. The arrows of the Comanches came in clouds. The war clubs of the Comanches clattered on the soft, yellow pavements. There were earthworks along the Boulevard Mark Clark and the hedges had been laced with sparkling wire. People were trying to understand. I spoke to Sylvia. "Do you think this is a good life?" The table held apples, books, long-playing records. She looked up. "No."

Patrols of paras and volunteers with armbands guarded the tall, flat buildings. We interrogated the captured Comanche. Two of us forced his head back while another poured water into his nostrils. His body jerked, he choked and wept. Not believing a hurried, careless, and exaggerated report of the number of casualties in the outer districts where trees, lamps, swans had been reduced to clear fields of fire we issued entrenching tools to those who seemed trustworthy and turned the heavy-weapons companies so that we could not be surprised from that direction. And I sat there getting drunker and drunker and more in love and more in love. We talked.

"Do you know Fauré's 'Dolly'?"

"Would that be Gabriel Fauré?"

"It would."

"Then I know it," she said. "May I say that I play it myself at certain times, when I am sad, or happy, although it requires four hands." . . .

And when they shot the scene in the bed I wondered how you felt under the eyes of the cameramen, grips, juicers, men in the mixing booth: excited? stimulated? And when they shot the scene in the shower I sanded a hollow-core door working carefully against the illustrations in texts and whispered instructions from one who had already solved the problem. I had made after all other tables, one while living with Nancy, one while living with Alice, one while living with Eunice, one while living with Marianne.

Red men in waves like people scattering in a square startled by something tragic or a sudden, loud noise accumulated against the barricades we had made of window dummies, silk, thoughtfully planned job descriptions (including scales for the orderly progress of other colors), wine in demijohns, and robes. I analyzed the composition of the barricade nearest me and found two ashtrays, ceramic, one dark brown and one dark brown with an orange blur at the lip; a tin frying pan; two-litre bottles of red wine; three-quarter-litre bottles of Black & White, aquavit, cognac, vodka, gin, Fad #6 sherry; a hollow-core door in birch veneer on black wrought-iron legs; a blanket, red-orange with faint blue stripes; a red pillow and a blue pillow; a woven straw wastebasket; two glass jars for flowers; corkscrews and can openers; two plates and two cups, ceramic, dark brown; a yellow-and-purple poster; a Yugoslavian carved flute, wood, dark brown; and other items. I decided I knew nothing.

—*Donald Barthelme*
"The Indian Uprising"
(Fiction), March 6, 1965

ing, I'm not saying, 'Poor me, or poor the other guy, we don't have the readership.' I just mean that this great human endeavor has come to an end, when we're talking about the serious novel, and that is worth marking. I'm sixty-seven years old and writing now in 2000. I started publishing in 1959 in *The New Yorker*. Believe me, I know. If it were otherwise I'd be delighted. But I'm not despairing, I tell you. How can you be despairing about this and spend ten hours a day writing? I'd do it anyway."

In 1993, just as he was reaching a point of real mastery, Philip Roth met with a crisis. As an artist, he had deepened his subject, moving to a more varied cast of characters and a sense of place—and, above all, toward deeper feeling, a more tragic voice. There were a couple of lesser books along the way—"The Facts" and "Deception"—but there were three books as fine as any he'd ever written: "The Counterlife"; a memoir of his father's dying, "Patrimony"; and "Operation Shylock." "The Counterlife" employs postmodern devices—the playing and replaying of scenes—and at the same time is drenched in emotion, not least the narrator's outrage over English anti-Semitism. In many ways, "Operation Shylock" is "Portnoy" brought to the next level of comedy and psychological tumult. But, while Roth was now writing well, his life was coming apart. Crippling back pain, the disintegration of his marriage to Claire Bloom, and a deep depression left him undone. And yet, eventually, with the help of his friends, Roth was somehow able to turn back to his work with greater concentration than ever before. With that sense of having survived a crisis, there came a liberating feeling of aesthetic release, and he began to write "Sabbath's Theater."

"Philip was falling apart," Judith Thurman said. "He was antic and unbelievably depressed and overwhelmed. He felt trapped and run to ground by a life he didn't want to be living. He was also deeply exasperated by the condescension from reviewers and their clichés: Roth the enemy of the Jews, the bugbear of feminism, the hysteric, the narcissist—all of that, though he cared about that less. So the response was 'I'm going to do what I'm doing for me and the twenty-five people I care about. I'm going to retire to the country and write my books.' So out of chaos came this hunkering down."

Ross Miller: "What happened to him was essentially acknowledging that even the strongest human being can be brought to his knees by an almost farcical combination of a bad marriage, a bad back, death. All the things he satirizes in 'The Anatomy Lesson' happened to him: the sudden loss of vitality, the collapse—and then the recovery, which gave him a sense of freedom."

"You're in luck. We have an opening for low man on the totem pole."

Norman Manea: "Philip now has the internal structure of a soldier. He is close to his mates, his friends and family in the trenches, there is solidarity there and he will not betray that. This is crucial for him. 'Sabbath's Theater' was written after this great crisis, and he just locked himself up and ate from a can and wrote. . . . I have changed a lot since I came here from Romania, but Philip has changed more. He went from being a social guy with the world in his fist to being a very reclusive man, very reluctant to reënter the chaos of the world. He created a strong, artificial order that became his natural order. He paid a heavy price, but he was lucky that, having paid it, he was compensated by literature."

Once, when we were talking about his career, I asked Roth when he had felt the happiest. Sometimes, when he is talking about books, he pauses for just a moment, the better to gather a well-formed argument. But now he answered immediately, definitely: When was he happiest? "When I was writing 'Sabbath's Theater,' " he said.

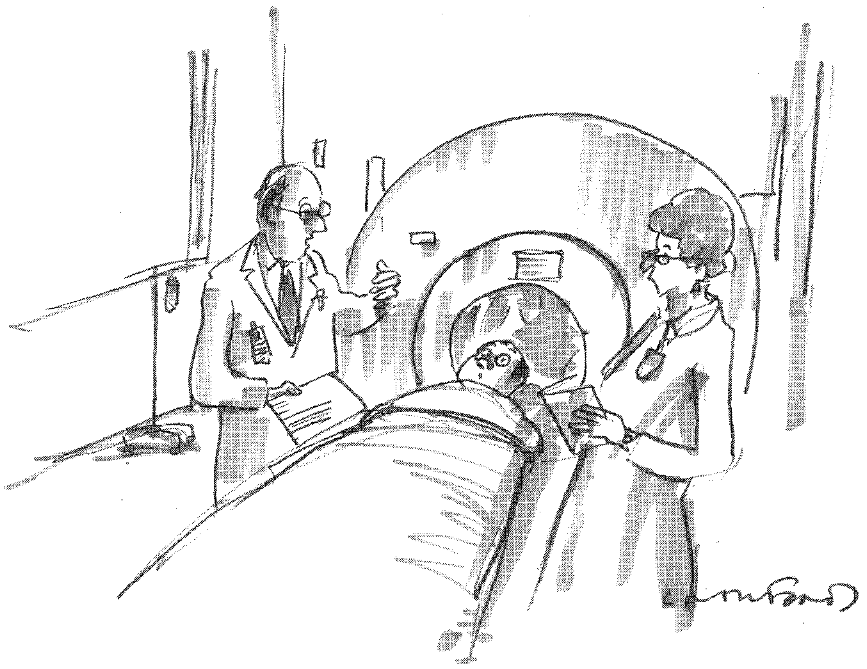
"But why?" The moment just after all that pain.

"Because I felt free. I feel like I am *in charge* now."

There was a time, in the eighties, when writing was hard for Roth, when hundreds of pages would end up in the trash before a novel would begin in earnest: "I'd sit there and think, I can't stand this, I can't stand myself, I can't stand being in this room, I can't stand the frustration of this room. That's what it was: the drip, drip, drip of the frustration. It was like an acid drip." But now there is tremendous fluency. Not to overrate the importance of personal crisis in the creation of an imaginative literature—thousands endure tragedy without any art coming of it—but Roth was able to convert personal crisis, a period when he thought he might never write again, and to pull himself out of that and onto a plane of mastery. "Like Charlie Parker, Philip can play what he hears now," Ross Miller said. "Writing is easy for him now, where it was once hard." Of course, Roth's fluency in writing his recent books could not have happened without the many years of labor, any more than Parker could play his improvisations without thousands of hours practicing chord changes. The craft and the imagination would not be there, would not be on call, without this singular sense of devotion and the time and the quiet and the health it seems to require.

"I don't think Philip has ever been this happy, certainly not since I've known him," Judith Thurman said. "He now lives the life he's always wanted to live without the beholdenness to others except to the people he cares about. He's like a graduate student/monk. There are not a lot of moving parts to his life now. Complicated domestic arrangements, the needs and conflicts of family life, are all Rube Goldberg machines, and he now does without that. When you are younger, you're propelled by a lot of unslaked desires. Now there is this one thing: the work."

Over the years, Roth has let himself be diverted at times from the work. He taught at the University of Pennsylvania and Hunter College. He conducted a series of interviews with Aharon Appelfeld, Ivan Klima, Milan Kundera, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Edna O'Brien, and Primo Levi—a collection that will one day be published as "Shop Talk." For Penguin, he edited the influential "Writers from the Other Europe" series, a paperback publishing project that brought Kundera, Tadeusz Borowski, Bruno Schulz, Ludvík Vaculík, Tadeusz Konwicki, and Danilo Kis to the attention of American readers. There were lectures and readings, there were PEN reports to write and trips to Prague and Jerusalem, there were Op-Ed pieces to write for the *Times*, there were petitions to sign, readings to give, there were love affairs, friendships, elderly parents. Now there is work, and that is nearly all. For a long time, Roth kept two small signs near his desk. One read, "Stay Put," the other, "No Optional Striving." Optional striving appears to be a category that includes everything save writing, exercise, sleep, and solitude.



"Forty minutes at three hundred and fifty degrees should do it, Miriam, but don't forget to baste continuously."

• •

"It's a wonderful experience," Roth said. "That act of passionate and minute memory is what binds your days together—days, weeks, months—and living with that is my greatest pleasure. I think for any novelist it has to be the greatest pleasure, that's why you're doing it—to make the daily connections. I do it by living a very austere life. I don't experience it as being austere in any negative sense, but you have to be a bit like a soldier with a barracks life, or whatever you want to call it. That is to say, I rule everything else out of my life. I didn't always, but I do now."

When we first started these interviews, in late winter, Roth told me he was "between books" and was thinking about what might follow "The Human Stain." A couple of months later, he was kidding around about long-ago Newark and said, "I was born before panty hose and frozen foods." And then he added, "That's a line from my next novel." It turned out that he had written over a hundred pages. At that moment, he recalled the fleeting period in an athlete's life when the vectors of his physical abilities and his mastery of the game—his experience, intelligence, and imagination—meet at the highest possible point. Although "Sabbath's Theater," "American Pastoral," "I Married a Communist," and "The Human Stain" are all novels set on the abyss, all of them shot through with the comedy of failure and decay, the sense of exhilaration in their author is unmistakable.

"I have to tell you that I don't believe in death, I don't experience the time as limited. I know it is, but I don't feel it," Roth said. "I could live three hours or I could live thirty years, I don't know. Time doesn't prey upon my mind. It should, but it doesn't. I don't know yet what this will all add up to, and it no longer matters, because there's no stopping. And this stuff is not going to matter anyway, as we know. So there's no sense even contemplating it, you know? All you want to do is the obvious. Just get it right, and the rest is the human comedy: the evaluations, the lists, the crappy articles, the insults, the praise.

"I want only to respond to my work. I don't want to respond to all that stuff. It's not important. It was, and it is for others at a certain time, but it can't be important anymore.

"If I'm healthy and strong and writing every day, who cares? Whatever problem is raised for me by what I'm writing, I think, Don't worry about it, all it takes is time. That's all it takes. I don't worry anymore that I don't have what it takes to solve the problem. There are no interruptions, and I've got all the time in the world. Time is on my side." ♦

A REPORTER AT LARGE

RESURRECTING ALEXANDRIA

Can rebuilding the Great Library also redeem the city?

BY ALEXANDER STILLE

For nearly three centuries before the birth of Christ, Alexandria was the center of the Western world. Alexander the Great founded the city in 332 B.C., and laid out its basic grid, with a long, wide central avenue, the Canopic Way, connecting the Gate of the Sun at one end of the city to the Gate of the Moon at the other. After Alexander's death, the empire was divided among his lieutenants, and Ptolemy I Soter, who had been one of Alexander's generals, took over Egypt. On the island of Pharos, in the middle of Alexandria's harbor, Ptolemy II built one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world: a lighthouse some four hundred feet high, whose flame was said to be visible for seventy miles.

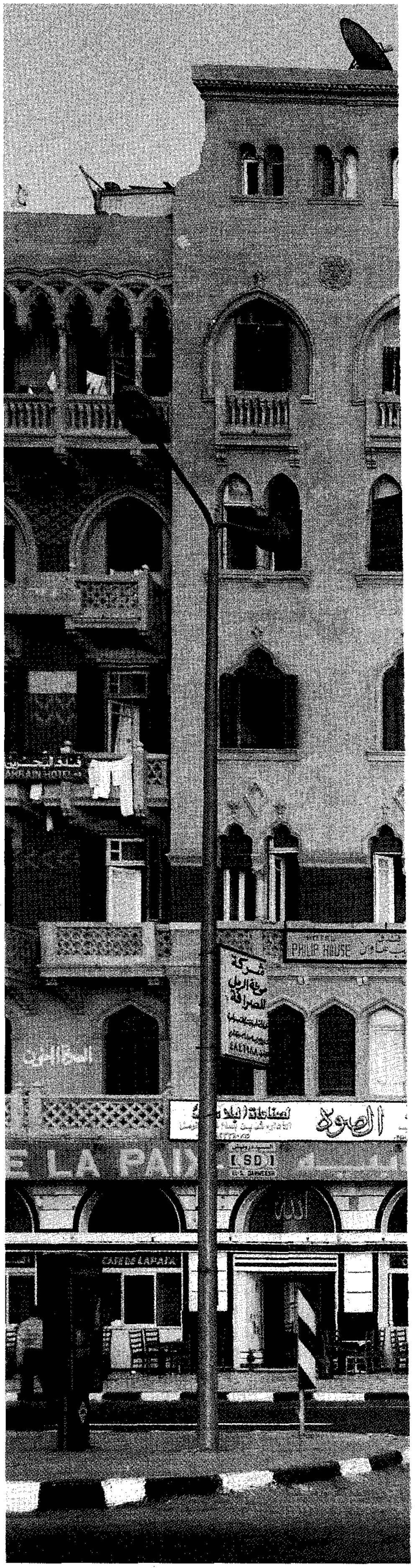
From this strategic location near the mouth of the Nile, the Macedonian Greeks were able to dominate both the trade routes of the Mediterranean and the Nile Valley, with its thousand-mile swath of rich agricultural land. Before the Ptolemaic dynasty ended, with the death of Cleopatra, in 30 B.C., Alexandria had grown into the world's first true metropolis, an opulent, multicultural center with a population of about six hundred thousand. (Although Alexandria was later outstripped by imperial Rome, Europe was unable to sustain urban life on such a scale again until the eighteenth century, when London and Paris reached a similar size.) The city the Ptolemies built combined the grandeur of Egypt with the classical traditions of Greece. A description survives of a Dionysian procession through Alexandria in the third century B.C. which included a hundred-and-eighty-foot golden phallus, two thousand golden-horned bulls, a gold statue of Alexander carried aloft by elephants, and an eighteen-foot statue of Dionysus, wearing a purple cloak and a golden crown of ivy and grapevines.

Perhaps the proudest achievement of Ptolemy I Soter and his heirs was the Great Library, which was situated in the Mouseion, the Temple of the Muses. The Ptolemies were insatiable in their pursuit of books. They decreed that every ship that passed through the port of Alexandria hand over any manuscript or scroll on board for copying. The Alexandrians then returned the copy and kept the original. They tricked the Athenians into giving them a set of the major Greek tragedies and paid a fortune for what they believed was the library of the philosopher Aristotle. The Ptolemies also called upon the sovereigns and rulers of the world to send them all books worthy of inclusion in the Great Library and summoned seventy-two Jewish scholars to translate the Torah, creating the ancient-Greek Old Testament, known as the Septuagint. They gathered Buddhist texts from India and a work on Zoroastrianism said to contain two million lines. Eventually, they succeeded in amassing about five hundred thousand scrolls.

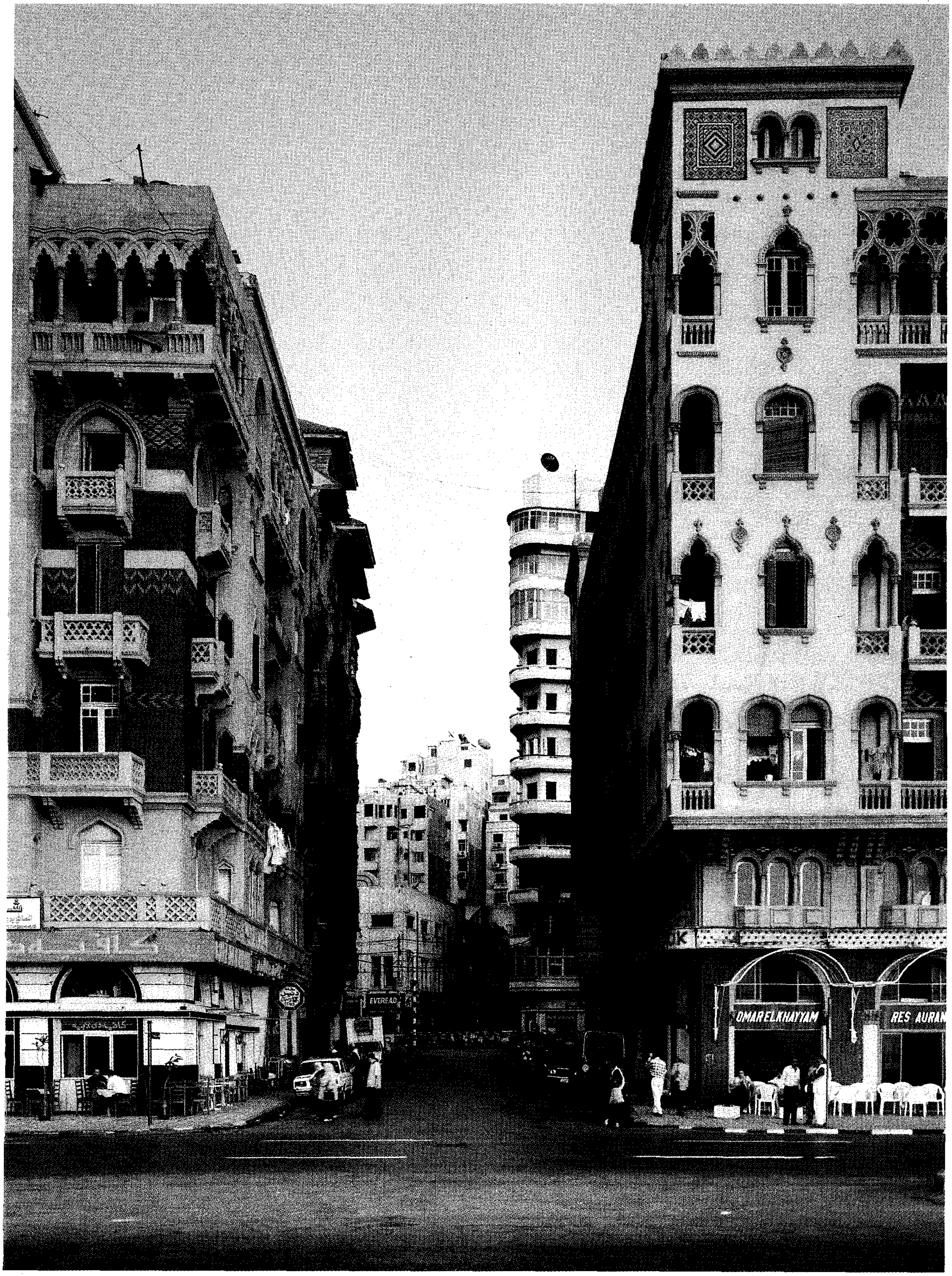
The Great Library housed scholars as well as books, and functioned as the ancient equivalent of a think tank. Euclid completed his famous "Elements" in Alexandria and dedicated it to Ptolemy I Soter. Other scholars at the Mouseion mapped and measured the Earth and the stars, and produced great works of astronomy, physics, and anatomy. But, under circumstances that remain mysterious, the Great Library's vast collection was destroyed, surviving only as fragments, copies, or quotations in later texts.

In the world of scholarship, the ancient Library of Alexandria is the ultimate romantic myth, a kind of paradise lost. "One ghostly image haunts all of us charged with preserving the creative heritage of humanity: the spectre of the great, lost Library of Alexandria," James H. Billington, the United States Librarian of Congress, said in a 1993

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERT POLIDORI



Alexandria enjoyed two periods of grandeur


EVEREADY
OMAR EL KHAYYAM
RES AURAN

Jnder the Ottoman pashas, it became a cosmopolitan city filled with eclectic fin-de-siècle buildings, wide boulevards, and grand squares.

speech. This image inspired the Egyptian government and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to undertake a major new library project, which has been billed as the Revival of the Ancient Library of Alexandria.

Alexandria today bears little resemblance to its glorious predecessor. It is poor and shabby, a provincial backwater in a country dominated by Cairo, the capital. The sidewalks are broken and crumbling; the streets are dark and dirty, strewn with litter and garbage, and full of potholes. The once elegant turn-of-the-century architecture is now in a state of dilapidation. Yet here, on an empty lot beside the Mediterranean, a mammoth edifice has been taking shape.

The new library's architecture is in keeping with its ambitions. A glass-and-aluminum disk-shaped roof almost twice the length of a football field tilts up at an angle, rising from below the ground to about a hundred feet in the air. It is meant to look like the sun emerging from the sea at dawn. The surface of the roof includes hundreds of different-colored panes, and resembles a huge computer circuit chip. On the back of the building, workers are finishing up an enormous curved wall encased in granite, on which characters from almost all the world's known scripts and alphabets are inscribed, symbolizing the universalist aims of the new project.

But now, as the building nears completion, questions are beginning to emerge: What does it mean to "revive" an ancient library whose exact location and contents are unknown? Can a library that will start with about two hundred and fifty thousand books—far fewer than the number in the library of a small four-year college in the United States—hope to live up to its grand claims? Does it make sense to build a library designed to hold eight million books at a moment when so much information is moving from printed to digital form? In the age of the Internet, does it even make sense to conceive of a universal library in terms of glass, aluminum, and concrete?

The project reflects the tensions in Egyptian society. The decision to build a major international library in Alexandria, by the sea, facing north toward Europe, is part of a larger effort to open Egypt up to foreign investment, satellite television, the Internet, and cellular phones. There are more than a million satellite dishes in this country of nearly seventy million, and the government has granted Egypt's two hundred and fifty thousand Internet subscribers unrestricted access to the World Wide Web. Yet even as the government of Muhammad Hosni Mubarak spends hundreds of millions of dollars on the library project, it is stepping up censorship in an effort to placate the country's Islamic militants. "It's a bit of a paradox that the government is building a library while it is banning books," says Hisham Kassem, an Egyptian journalist who publishes a weekly English-language news magazine called the Cairo *Times*. During the past year, the Egyptian government has earned a spot on the Committee to Protect Journalists' list of the ten worst enemies of freedom of the press.

The idea of creating a cultural revival in Alexandria by government diktat from Cairo would seem to be a contradiction in terms, and the library is already at odds with some of the local intellectuals and cultural institutions. It is difficult to see how the library project can remake Alexandria into a hub of world culture after the government in Cairo has, for more than forty years, sucked so much life out of the city. Alexandria's fortunes have waxed and waned according to Egypt's attitudes toward Europe, and that deep ambivalence is very much present in the library issue. Culturally, "it's as if there are two different winds," Kamal el-Zoheiry, the director of the library in Cairo, said in an interview in 1998. "One is from the Mediterranean, and the other is from the desert. From the sea, it's nice. From the desert, it's hot."

Alexandria actually enjoyed two periods of prosperity, in which it became a cosmopolitan center of culture and learning. The first occurred during the rule of the Ptolemies, which ended when Caesar Augustus dethroned Antony and Cleopatra, in 30 B.C. Thereafter, in the early fourth century, Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire, and Alexandria became a center of Coptic Christianity. But in 642 A.D. Muslims from the Arabian Peninsula conquered Egypt and moved the capital to what is now Cairo. Sea trade gradually became less important to Egypt, and by the time Napoleon reached Alexandria, in 1798, he found a small fishing town of some seven thousand souls.

Starting in 1805, however, the pashas of the Ottoman Empire set out to modernize Egypt and stimulate trade by luring Europeans to Alexandria. In a matter of decades, the city was once again a thriving port, the center of Egypt's booming cotton industry, and soon one of the first cities in Africa with electricity, modern plumbing, trams, street lights, newspapers, movie theatres, and a stock exchange. A long building boom, which began in the late nineteenth century, filled the city with Italianate villas, eclectic fin-de-siècle buildings, Art Deco palaces, wide boulevards, and grand squares with magnificent bronze statues. The streets were a curious babel of languages, cultures, and nationalities: Jews speaking Arabic, Egyptians speaking Greek, Armenians speaking Italian, Syrians speaking a Franco-Arabic patois; and men in French suits, English bowlers, and Egyptian djellabahs smoking water pipes in the cafés. "Five races, five languages, a dozen creeds" is how the English novelist Lawrence Durrell described the city in "The Alexandria Quartet." By the nineteen-fifties, there were some hundred and fifty thousand Europeans in Alexandria, out of a population of about six hundred thousand. "The city was beautiful, and so clean that one could have eaten off the streets," the Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz once said about the Alexandria of his youth.

Even though the city was almost devoid of ancient ruins, its twentieth-century inhabitants, through some strange kind of metempsychosis, felt themselves to be reliving the cosmopolitan life of the Ptolemy era. E. M. Forster, another English writer who lived in Alexandria, wrote that "visions kept coming as I went about in trams or on foot or bathed in the delicious sea." Looking at the Arab fort on the island of Pharos, he "would multiply the height . . . by four and so envisage the Pharos [the lighthouse] which had once stood on the same site. At the crossing of the two main streets I would erect the tomb of Alexander the Great." Durrell called Alexandria the "capital of memory."

Eventually, however, this world also

The new library, which is designed to be a kind of amphitheatre facing the sea, has seven terraced floors. The lowest floor, below sea level, will house ancient manuscripts, and each successive level is supposed to advance metaphorically to the present.

"They're in a statistical dead heat."

disappeared. Alexandria, Egypt's "European" city, became the target of nationalist resentment that arose after the British occupied the country in 1882 and retained a controlling hand in its affairs until the revolution of 1952. As Gamal Abdel Nasser began confiscating foreign businesses, French, British, and Israeli troops occupied the Suez Canal in order to undo its nationalization, and the attack further enhanced anti-European sentiment. Nasser responded by expelling Jews and British and French residents en masse. Today, Alexandria's population of four million includes virtually no Europeans.

As foreign capital fled, the revolutionary government centralized power in Cairo and nationalized nearly all civic and cultural institutions. Many Alexandria businesses moved their headquarters to Cairo because of the constant need to obtain government permits. Publishers, movie producers, journalists, writers, actors, and artists followed, and Alexandria's elected municipal council was replaced by a series of governors—usually retired military men—dispatched from Cairo. "What happened afterward was a tragedy, for which we still feel badly," said Mostafa El-Abbadi, a distinguished professor of ancient history at the University of Alexandria, who in 1960 returned from his doctoral studies, at Cambridge, to find that his lively, beloved Alexandria was now dour and monochromatic.

In 1974, on a Presidential visit to Alexandria, Richard Nixon unwittingly acted as a catalyst to the library project by asking his Egyptian hosts where the ancient Library of Alexandria had stood. The Egyptians were embarrassed to admit that they had no idea and later asked El-Abbadi to draw up a memorandum on the subject.

"The ancient library might be right beneath us," El-Abbadi told me last summer, when we met in his study in downtown Alexandria, which overlooks the eastern harbor. No one knows exactly where the ancient library stood, but we know it was somewhere within the royal palaces of the Ptolemies, which occupied a vast area near the harbor. Indeed, the lot in front of El-Abbadi's house—now occupied by a rusting amusement park—was considered one of the possible sites for the new library. "Perhaps if we dug in the basement, we might find the ancient library," El-Abbadi said, petting a beautiful Siamese cat named Cleopatra.

El-Abbadi is one of the few remaining Alexandrian cosmopolitans. A small man of seventy-one with cottony tufts of gray hair, he combines a sense of warm Egyptian hospitality with the courtly manners and natty professorial dress of a British university don. A broadly educated man, he is equally at home in Arabic, English, French, Latin, and ancient Greek. He is a Muslim, with a keen interest in the Greek, Jewish, and Christian history of Egypt. His study—lined floor to ceiling with books on ancient history and the poetry of Milton, Shelley, and Keats—might briefly give you the feeling that you were somewhere in England, until a gust of wind blows open the flowered curtains, offering a glimpse of the Mediterranean. The brilliant Egyptian sun floods in, tempered by the sea breeze.

El-Abbadi and his university colleagues saw UNESCO's sudden interest in the old library as an opportunity to push for a major new university library. But when they approached UNESCO directly, El-Abbadi said, they were told, "We cannot make agreements with universities—we make agreements with governments." So the project was recast as the Revival of the Ancient Library of Alexandria, or the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, as the library is now officially called. The idea did not really take off, however, until Hosni Mubarak became the President of Egypt after the assassination of Anwar Sadat, in 1981. The French President François Mitterrand—who spent the waning years of his life building the new Bibliothèque Nationale de France, in Paris—was apparently influential in persuading Mubarak of its importance. In 1986, the Egyptian government procured UNESCO support for the project, and in 1988 Mubarak laid a symbolic foundation stone.

The following year, UNESCO sponsored a major international competition for a building design, attracting five hundred and twenty-four entries from fifty-eight countries. The jury, composed of Egyptian and foreign architects, selected a bold, modernist concept by a team of young, little-known architects based in Norway. Designed as a kind of amphitheatre facing the sea, the building has seven terraced floors, each narrower than the one beneath it, which rise in one enormous open space under the tilting glass roof. The lowest floor, below sea level, will house ancient manuscripts, and each successive floor is supposed to advance metaphorically to the present.

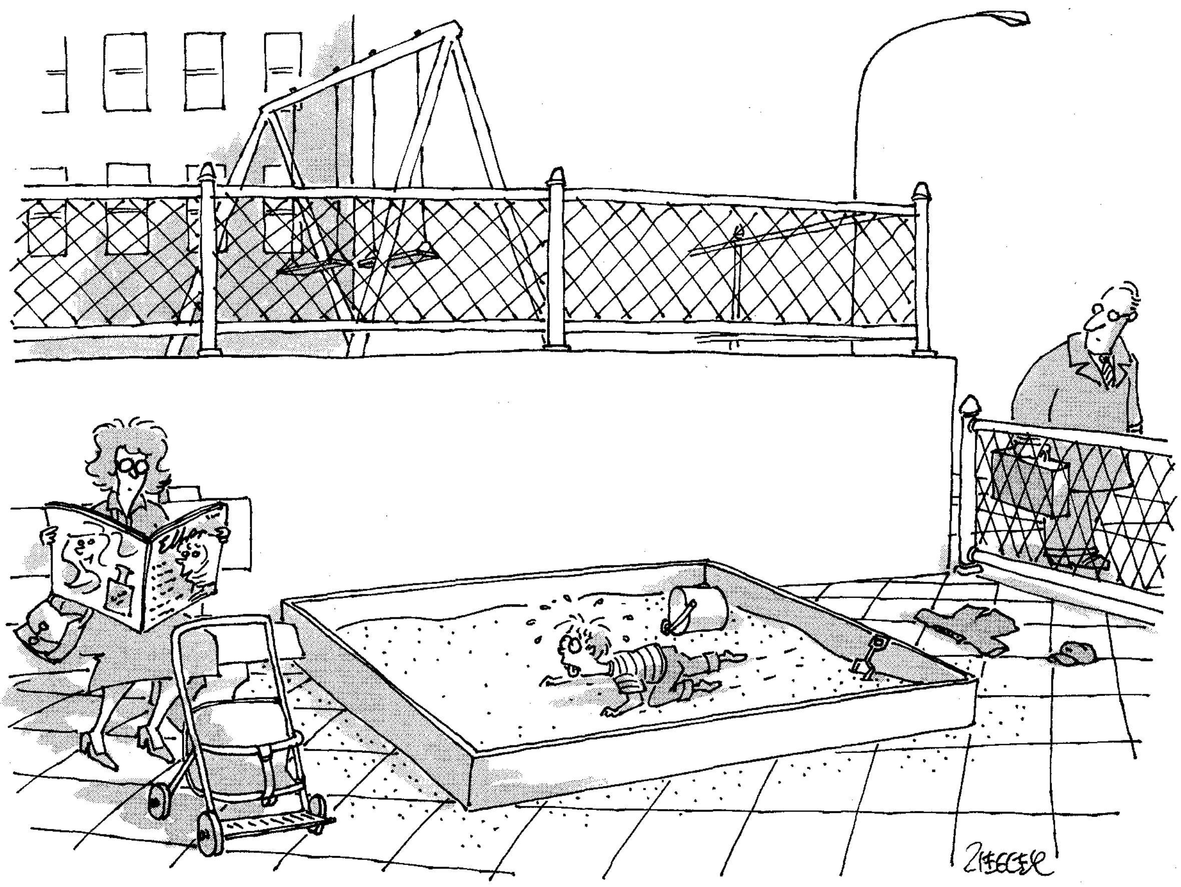
To raise money for the project, Mubarak summoned a group of world leaders to a meeting in Aswan, in southern Egypt. There the assembled company—including Mitterrand, Queen Sophia of Spain, Princess Caroline of Monaco, and the heads of most of the Arab nations—witnessed the curious spectacle of sheikhs from the oil-rich Gulf States, where even the hint of dissenting information is harshly punished, competing with one another to make the largest contribution to the new universal library. Sheikh Zaid bin Sultan of the United Arab Emirates stunned the crowd with an offer of twenty million dollars, only to be bested by Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, who put up twenty-one million dollars—which was then topped by Saudi Arabia's twenty-three million dollars. (Luckily for the Egyptians, Saddam's check cleared before the beginning of the Gulf War, which turned Egypt and Iraq into adversaries and drained Iraq's coffers.)

Relatively little is known about the library that is being "revived." In all likelihood, it was founded by Ptolemy I Soter, who is also believed to have planned the lighthouse and built numerous temples and a fabulous, long-lost burial site for Alexander. As foreigners governing in Egypt, the Ptolemies took on the trappings of traditional Egyptian pharaohs but also saw themselves as the rightful heirs of classical Greek culture. The Library of Alexandria was probably modelled on the Lyceum, Aristotle's library and school in Athens.

The Ptolemies eventually amassed some four hundred and ninety thousand scrolls written on papyrus—seven hundred thousand if you count duplicates. Another forty-two thousand scrolls were stored in a "daughter library," housed in the Temple of Serapis. Scholars debate whether the four hundred and ninety thousand scrolls represented four hundred and ninety thousand separate works or the total number of scrolls. Longer works were stored on multiple scrolls, so that the twenty-four "books" of Homer's Iliad, for example, probably represented twenty-four scrolls. Either way, the figure was enormous. (In the fourteenth century A.D., the largest library in Europe, the Sorbonne, had about seventeen hundred books.) The Great Library, which was part of a complex that included a zoological park and botanical gardens, was more than a collection of books. According to the geographer Strabo, who visited Alexandria around 20 B.C., the library "was part of the royal palaces, it had a walk, an arcade, a large house in which was a refectory for members of the Mouseion. They formed a community who held property in common with a priest appointed by the kings (and, under the Empire, by Caesar) in charge of the Mouseion."

Even in ancient times, the scholar's life was sometimes a source of ridicule. "Many are feeding in populous Egypt, scribblers on papyrus, ceaselessly wrangling in the birdcage of the Muses," one skeptic in the third century B.C. writes. But Alexandria's scholars were not simply pedants. Eratosthenes, the head librarian from 245 to 204 B.C., made the first accurate measurement of the circumference of the Earth. An Alexandrian astronomer named Aristarchus understood, nearly eighteen hundred years before Copernicus, that the Earth revolved around the sun. The anatomists Herophilus and Erasistratus, working in the third century B.C., dissected human bodies and concluded that the brain was the center of the nervous system and the seat of intelligence. And the engineer Heron of Alexandria, in his work "Pneumatica," laid out the principles of steam power. The twentieth-century French

"Derek's sneakers were made in Malaysia. Can anyone show us where Malaysia is?"



historian Fernand Braudel observed that the Alexandrians had enough technical knowledge to start an industrial revolution but lacked the economic incentive to create labor-saving machinery because they relied on slaves.

The destruction of the Great Library meant that much of this knowledge was lost to the West for about fifteen hundred years. Gone, too, are hundreds of works of the great Greek dramatists and poets, and virtually all of ancient history. Only three historians—Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon—survived the first five hundred years of Greek historiography, although we know, from brief references in later works, of countless books about various ancient peoples (the Chaldeans, the Babylonians, the Etruscans, the Carthaginians, the Egyptians, and the Ptolemies) which almost certainly were in the ancient library.

Historians have charged several different suspects with the destruction of the library, motivated in part by their own nationality or ideology: Edward Gibbon blames the Christians, consistent with his theory that religion caused the fall of the Roman Empire; Professor El-Abbadi, in his book on the library, blames Julius Caesar; and, in his 1987 book, "The Vanished Library," the Italian scholar Luciano Canfora seems equally determined to blame the Arabs and exonerate his fellow-countryman Caesar.

The evidence against Caesar would, at first glance, appear to be quite strong. Seneca and Plutarch both wrote that Caesar, after taking Alexandria in 48 B.C., found himself under attack from the sea and torched the boats in the harbor. The fire spread to the shore and, according to Seneca, some forty thousand scrolls were destroyed. Canfora's book points out that Seneca's text, the closest in time to the event, refers to scrolls in a warehouse. These, he writes, were probably books stored near the docks ready to be exported. Even if they were in the library, forty thousand scrolls would be only a tiny fraction of the four hundred and ninety thousand original scrolls the library possessed. Plutarch reports that Marc Antony compensated Cleopatra by commandeering two hundred thousand scrolls from the library at Pergamon—the other great Hellenistic library of the time—and giving them to Alexandria. Clearly, an important number of works were destroyed in Caesar's fire, but it is also clear that the library, as an institution, was not destroyed, since there are several accounts of work being done there not long after Caesar's time.

The evidence against the Christians is even more circumstantial. After Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire, in 324 A.D., tensions rose in Alexandria between pagans and Christians. In 391 A.D., the Christians went on an iconoclastic rampage, smashing pagan idols throughout the city and destroying the Temple of Serapis, which housed the daughter library. But there is no specific record of their having also attacked the Great Library in the Mouseion.

The last principal suspect is the first Caliph of Egypt, who ruled the country after the Arabs brought Islam to North Africa, in the seventh century A.D. According to one twelfth-century Arabic account, the new vizier of Alexandria asked the Caliph what to do with the books in this enormous library, and the Caliph replied, "If their content is in accordance with the word of Allah, we may do without them . . . If on the other hand they contain matter not in accord with the book of Allah, there can be no need to preserve them. Proceed then and destroy them." This account goes on to say that the bathhouses of Alexandria were heated for six months with burning scrolls. However, El-Abbadi points out that the account was written nearly six centuries after the incident, and may reflect the religious hostilities between Muslims and Christians during the Crusades rather than historical fact. As a rule, the early Islamic conquerors respected local customs and cultures. Now, in a recent publication, Canfora fingers a new possible culprit: Queen Zenobia of Palmyra (contemporary Syria), who took Alexandria in 270 A.D., prompting a ferocious counterattack by Emperor Aurelian, which reduced much of the city to ruins.

The idea that the library was destroyed in a single catastrophic event is probably a myth. There were at least a dozen major libraries in the ancient world—in places like Antioch, Athens, and Rome, as well as Pergamon—and none of their collections fared any better than Alexandria's, because ancient documents were too perishable. "Papyrus rolls were very vulnerable," Alan Cameron, a classicist at Columbia University, told me. "I suspect that if you went to Alexandria in the second century A.D. you might have found broken scraps of papyri where many rolls had been." (The papyri that do survive—such as the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gnostic Gospels—were buried in dry caves or in a sealed container, like a tomb.) Given the fragility of ancient documents, it's likely that every major disaster—fire, flood, political upheaval, or military invasion—involved the loss of books.

The works that have survived were generally the most popular texts, which were copied and recopied and eventually found their way onto a more stable medium, like parchment. Made of tough animal skin, it gradually replaced papyrus by about the third or fourth century after Christ. And even the early parchment documents had to be copied repeatedly. The oldest complete version of Homer, for example, is a medieval copy made in the tenth or eleventh century A.D., nearly eighteen hundred years after it was originally written. "The relationship between texts that have survived and those that are lost is about one to forty," Canfora writes. "The relationship is even more unfavorable when you consider the countless number of texts lost without a single trace."

Like its ancient predecessor, the new Library of Alexandria has the feeling of a grand royal project. Power in Egypt still flows from the top, and Suzanne Mubarak, the President's wife, is the titular head of a commission overseeing the project. When she visited the construction site last spring, Mrs. Mubarak suddenly decided that a drab-looking hospital wing next door spoiled the look of the library from a certain angle. "That has to go," she said, and it has since been demolished.

Officially, power over the library project was supposed to be shared by UNESCO and the Egyptian government. But "the Egyptians are very good at creating these diabolic mechanisms where they nominally give control to a foreigner but then undermine it through a complex double structure," explained Giovanni Romerio, a UNESCO official from Italy who was put in charge of the Executive Secretariat, to oversee day-to-day work on the project. Romerio quickly discovered that the real power lay with two committees in Cairo, one headed by Mrs. Mubarak and the other by the Minister of Higher Education. On paper, a professor of architecture at the University of Alexandria named Mohsen Zahran was Romerio's second-in-command, but in fact, Romerio said, "he took orders from the minister," in Cairo. Romerio said he had been constantly outmaneuvered by his deputy, who at one point tried to hide the fact that he had gone to the Frankfurt Book Fair to acquire books. "He could not tolerate sharing power," Romerio, who reached retirement age in 1995, said. Zahran then became the head of the Executive Secretariat.

Zahran, who wears dark suits, is a stocky man with gray hair, a grayish complexion, and a dark mole on his left nostril. He affects an air of joviality and engages in an almost mystical lyricism, referring to the new library as "a lighthouse of knowledge." But he has the reputation of a suspicious and closed man with a prickly character, a tough political infighter who knows how to work the levers of the Egyptian bureaucracy. "He is an apparatchik," Romerio, who is now back in Italy, said.

As an architect, Zahran has been effective in the construction phase of the library, but "he is not a library man," El-Abbadi told me. It was not until 1997 that El-Abbadi and other intellectuals were invited to form an advisory group to recommend books for the library, and they haven't been consulted very much. Originally, the library was supposed to be finished in 1995 and have a collection of two million books by the year 2000. It is now slated to open later this year with two hundred and fifty thousand to three hundred thousand books. Meanwhile, the cost of the structure has tripled, from sixty-five million dollars to a hundred and ninety-two million dollars, and the Egyptians have locked themselves into high operating costs in perpetuity. (The project's chief architect, Christoph Kapeller, says that between ten and fifteen per cent of the total construction cost is typically spent to keep a building in good working order.) The government has not yet established a budget for maintenance or acquisitions.

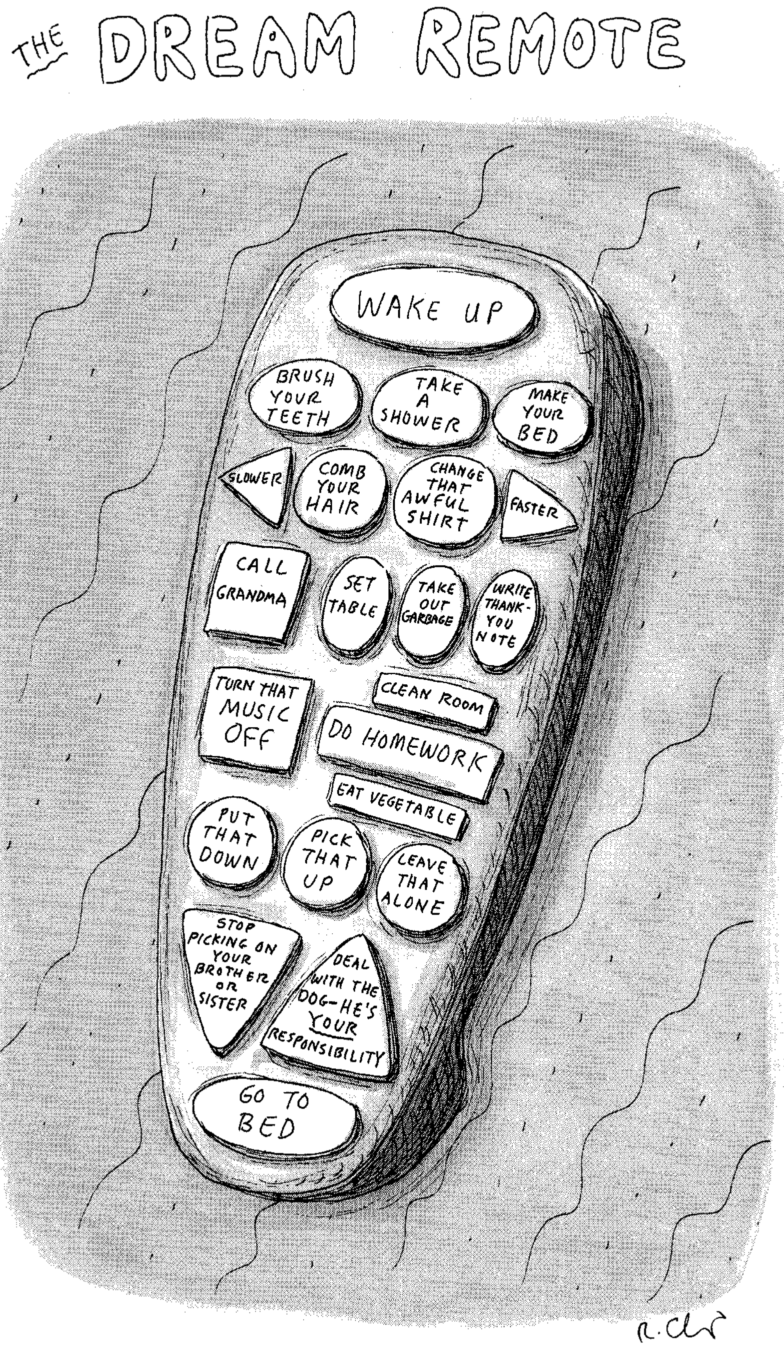
How many of those acquisitions should be printed texts is also an unresolved question, because the library was conceived before the Internet revolution. Gérald Grunberg, a French librarian whose services have been "donated" to Alexandria by his government, thinks the subsequent delays have actually been providential. "I think we are lucky to be starting now rather than five or six years earlier," said Grunberg, who worked on the new Bibliothèque Nationale de France, a high-tech library that has been beset by problems. Back then, "we were buying technology that was obsolete in a year," explained Grunberg, an intense-looking intellectual with wire-rimmed glasses, cigarette-stained teeth, and a handlebar mustache. "Now I think there has been a settling or stabilization in the technology."

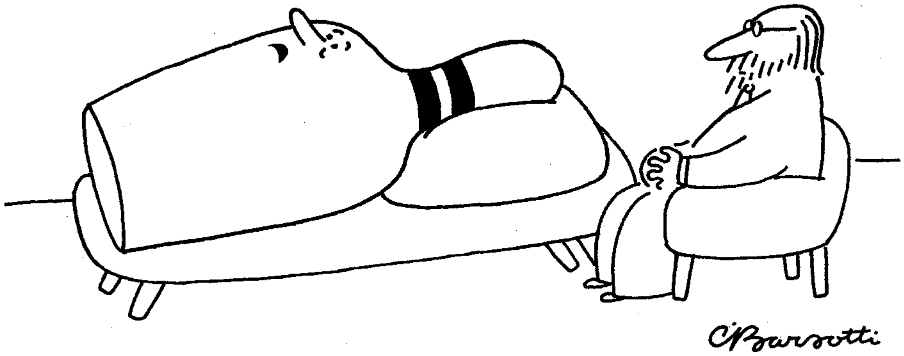
Grunberg's field has grown dramatically in complexity and importance over the past decade. Librarians now must master immensely complicated and expensive information systems and understand fibre-optic cables, server networks, software formats, and audiovisual systems, among many other things. Grunberg and his Egyptian colleagues recognize that the goal of building a universal library "makes no sense." Even the Library of Congress, in Washington, with a hundred and nineteen million items in its collection, is selective in its acquisitions, and the cost of being even quasi-universal comes to some three hundred and eighty-six million dollars a year.

The current Library of Alexandria will try to have a good general collection and several areas of specialization—regarding Alexandria and the rest of Egypt, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean—in which it hopes to build world-class collections. Already, it has made some important acquisitions and received some major gifts. It now has, on microfilm, the papers relating to the construction and operation of the Suez Canal. The Spanish government has given it microfilm copies of the Arabic manuscripts in the royal library at El Escorial. It has become the custodian of some ten thousand Arabic manuscripts from local mosques and libraries and is setting up a modern laboratory for the conservation of manuscripts.

The new library will also have an information-systems center, with banks of computers and Internet access; a large audiovisual library, which will include the archives of Egyptian television; and a planetarium. There are plans for a business-research center, where Egyptian companies could purchase worldwide market information. But does it make sense to collect all this material in a physical space when it could simply be made available on-line? "Actually, I think it is more important than ever," Grunberg said. "With globalization, there is an enormous need for spaces where one will assemble and conserve the collective memory of a community or of a country. . . . Egypt is a country with a great civilization, an extremely rich history, and a strong identity, but because of historical circumstances—the conquest of Napoleon, the British occupation of the country—many of the cultural riches of Egypt are in great museums and libraries overseas. The Alexandria Library testifies to a desire to conserve Egyptian identity."

But memory and identity are intensely political issues. Since the nationalist revolution in 1952, Egypt has chosen to ignore its long stretches of foreign domination. "The Egyptians are proud of only two periods in their history—ancient Egypt and the Arab conquest," El-Abbadi told me. "The Greek and Roman period is looked upon in a way as an alien culture." In Egypt, history teachers traditionally have skipped from the collapse of the Egyptian pharaohs to the Arab conquest in 642 A.D., leaving nearly a thousand years of Greek, Roman, and Christian culture in Egypt unexplored. Last year, however, the government set up a committee to reform the curriculum to include the Ptolemaic and Coptic periods. And Alexandria, in particular, has decided that its past may well be its future—albeit a fantasy version of that past. There have been at least six plans afoot to rebuild the ancient lighthouse, though no one knows exactly what it looked like. One plan would copy a famous engraving of the monument, adding shops on the lower floors





"Why me?"

and a revolving restaurant at the top. Another project—sponsored by the French clothing designer Pierre Cardin—involves laser projections. At the same time, French archeologists believe they have located the remains of the actual lighthouse, out in the eastern harbor.

As Alexandria undergoes another building boom, developers are discovering that a surprising number of Greco-Roman monuments lie intact underneath the nineteenth-century city. But, too often, they emerge only briefly before being bulldozed over again by contractors reluctant to lose time or money to excavation. "Unfortunately, the Egyptians have no concept of salvage archeology," said Jean-Yves Empereur, a French archeologist who is excavating the ancient lighthouse, and who also heads the Centre d'Études Alexandrines, an archeology project sponsored by the French government. Egyptian authorities will call for excavation only when it is obvious that a major archeological site is being damaged. Empereur has kept a particularly close watch on the library, since it stands on part of the ancient royal palaces of the Ptolemies.

At a certain point in 1993, Empereur noticed that bulldozers were digging the foundation in the middle of the night. He alerted Mohamed Awad, an Egyptian architect who is the head of the Alexandria Preservation Trust, and Awad went to see for himself. "The bulldozers were working between one and four o'clock in the morning," Awad told me when we met in his office in the crumbling downtown area. "They claim they were doing it because there was no traffic around."

When Awad and Empereur went to see Zahran, he became furious and ended the meeting. Awad then videotaped the nocturnal digging and filed a report with the police. The French newspaper *Le Monde* picked up the story and ran an article that embarrassed UNESCO and the Egyptian government. A small amount of money was appropriated for an archeological excavation, and almost immediately workers uncovered two second-century B.C. Greek mosaic floors—almost as finely detailed as oil paintings—which gave a tantalizing glimpse of what a full and systematic excavation of the area might have revealed. But the funds for excavation soon ran out, and now, ironically, the new library may be burying the ancient library once and for all.

Empereur also discovered, quite by accident, that the new library had missed an opportunity to obtain fifty thousand valuable books weeded out of the University of Alexandria's collection, which ended up being sold on the street for about a dollar apiece. "I could only afford to buy about six hundred," Empereur told me as he pulled open a glass case to show me some of the volumes he had rescued. Among them were seventeenth- and eighteenth-century illustrated travelogues by Europeans who visited Egypt and the Middle East; many of the books had come from the library of the Egyptian royal family. In London or Paris antiquarian shops, each of these books would have sold for hundreds if not thousands of dollars. Reportedly, the university librarians had first offered them to Zahran but were told that the new library was not interested in old books.

Again, Empereur was contacted by *Le Monde*, and a short article appeared. The Minister of Higher Education then reportedly made an angry call to Zahran, who quickly took possession of twenty thousand books, though the best ten thousand had already been sold. Zahran denied that he had ever refused any books and insisted that the incident was the result of a regrettable miscommunication.

Ultimately, the success of the new library will depend on whether Alexandria can once again become the literate, sophisticated, multicultural city that Nasser's revolutionary government dismantled in the nineteen-fifties and sixties. Unfortunately, however, Zahran's autocratic manner has alienated him from some of Alexandria's more important cultural resources. The Preservation Trust, for example, has a formidable collection of photographs, maps, and postcards from the nineteenth and early twentieth century, but it's not likely to go to the library, because the library has yet to ask for the collection and Zahran and Awad have barely spoken to each other since their showdown over the excavation.

Their personal clash epitomizes the deeper conflicts in Alexandria. Though only in his mid-forties, Awad, like El-Abbadi, is a product of the city's old multicultural society. Half Egyptian, half Greek, he was educated at British schools in Alexandria and moves seamlessly between Arabic, French, and English. He is a working architect, but also spends much of his energy preserving nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Alexandria. "In trying to save this cosmopolitan world, I am trying to save myself," Awad said. "Alexandria symbolizes this pluralism, this tolerance, and this multinational society that existed throughout the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century. . . . It's part of our history, but it's also our future. I can only envision a future for this city as an open, international city. And the library project, whether it will work or not, is at least in line with what we see as the future of the city." ♦

FICTION

EUROPEAN WEDDING

BY MATTHEW KLAM

Their summer of flirting had led them here: a half-built, downtown clothing store—a construction site—that had been walled off from the street by a makeshift bay door that Rich had padlocked from the inside. It was seven o'clock at night. Rich was explaining the benefits of an auxiliary water pump.

Nora had no interest in an auxiliary water pump. Nobody ever did. They were both flush-faced. The summer was over. Rich had to fly to France in five hours to get married. The more he joked with Nora, and lied to her, and led her on, the more protected he felt from the unpleasant, nauseating, impending upheaval that was going to be the rest of his life. He'd endured weeks of pussified wedding-planning crap—the flowery mailings, the drilling and re-enamelling of his teeth, the facial that left him bleeding. Why was getting married so humiliating? Nora was his reward.

She was "sweet," and she "adored" him. She had the demeanor of a cooking-show hostess about to apologize for burning the turkey. She wore a brown cashmere cardigan, a short skirt, white knee-high socks. She sold clothes that looked like that. All over the city, preppy but sexy was in, and now she was renovating the store from scratch.

For all their long talks, he didn't know much about her. ("If you're so into marrying her," she asked once, "why do you call me every night?") She was violently allergic to nuts, she played soccer in college. He couldn't figure out how old she was. She had thick, creamy makeup, and a face that shifted quickly, the way a five-year-old's could, to record any perceived meanness. Her walk was jumbled, stilted, uneven but purposeful; it implied a hip injury from childhood. She had a dozen decisions to make tonight so that walls could go up next week, questions about the louvered mezzanine windows, the plumbing; questions from the engineer about acoustic ceiling tile.

Nora was his only client. Nora's happiness was his full-time job.

"You like working with me because I'm lovable—because you love me," she said once.

MACDUFF EVERTON, "LOIRE VALLEY" (1997)/JANET BORDEN GALLERY

She had a weirdly shaped head, long in the back, which haunted him. She had a big nose, slightly crooked, and really good perfume. The fact that she wasn't Gynnie, the woman he was about to marry—the wrongness of it—excited him. She existed apart from the feminine regime that was everywhere around him. She was someone else. She could die tomorrow; he didn't care.

There was nobody else in the building. They were talking about a structural column that would go where they were standing—to support a staircase that didn't exist yet—when Nora stomped on his foot. He pushed her. She laughed. They went from that to, like, silence. He was looking at her big lips, so nervous he had flulike symptoms. It was there for the taking. God, he deserved a little make-out session.

Their bodies came together and their arms went around each other with such excitement and relief that a sobbing noise [illegible] a grunt got stuck in her throat. She tasted like cosmetic powder. He felt a pressure, from her mouth, broad and forceful; it was her tongue pressing forward, and he tried to meet it with his but it pushed his out of the way and came deeper into his mouth. Her tongue was difficult to make room for. Was this sexy?

He stood back, in order to breathe, pretending to smile, to free himself from the tongue thing she just did. He started measuring her in terms of his fiancée; he couldn't help it. He noticed she was a lot wider. She fell, he realized, into that category of women who are not actually fat but big, and know how to be big—their hair is big, and they know how to dress with wide belts. She had a curious look on her face—one of vacancy and desire—and tiny white strings of opaque spit had formed, like webs, in the corners of her mouth. She licked her lower lip—it was dry and pitted—and then grabbed the back of his head, jacked it toward her, and threw her tongue down his throat like a waterlogged sneaker.

He stood, impaled, on the tongue of the woman who employed him.

She was his only client. You idiot, idiot, idiot. Kissing her was so terrible he stopped and thought of what to do next. He took off her cardigan, then her shirt. Her bra was sheer, simple lace netting, with no decoration. She had stretch marks at the top of her chest, and goose bumps along her hairless arms. Amid the ammoniac and dusty smell of glue guns, tar sealant, and Sheetrock dust, there was something else coming off her; he thought of chickpeas and deodorant. She undid her skirt, and dropped it. She came forward in loafers and knee socks and underwear—she seemed huge now—making goo-goo eyes. She was the biggest girl who'd ever made goo-goo eyes at him. She reached out and pulled on his nuts, which hurt.

He took off her bra. Her tits—fell *down*. He tried to raise one up to normal height, where it had been in the bra, and then he tried the other. Bloop. She looked at him, her sad eyes smiling. And then she stepped back and lifted one leg and then the other, humming quietly, and he realized she was dancing.

Her father owned the only other project Rich's company was in the process of constructing, a hundred-and-twenty-five-million-dollar deal about a mile from here involving forty subcon-

tractors from around the country—a job so huge that Rich had been relegated to underground utilities. He wasn't in a position to push her away. He could feel the vast inexperience of a woman of complete fragility, shielded by her wealth, reacting to his withdrawal.

"I'm getting married in three days and you are disgusting" was what he wanted to say. "Haven't you ever just goofed around a little? Why don't you put your clothes back on?"

"My darling," she said to him, and pulled his head to her chest.

A little later, they were on the floor; she was mostly on the concrete, he was mostly in the dirt, trying to breathe through the top of his head. How long could this go on? She rode against his nose, getting closer. He tried to zone out, and pictured himself lying on a beach in Rio, eating a ripe plum over and over. Gynnie lay beside him, in a bikini, tugging on his arm, urging him to finish the plum so they could get out of here. "Hurry up, baby!" It didn't make any sense, but the thought of her saved him. In reality, she had no idea where he was, and when she found out she'd dump him and never speak to him again.

"Arrghh!" Nora yelled. Rich worried that a passing stroller, a cop, a homeless person, might hear them and rush onto the site—arrest them, shoot them, beat them to death with the spade beside Nora's writhing head. What really worried Rich was the sound of the yelling itself—a lonely yell, from a woman who didn't have boyfriends, who would have to be satisfied with this degraded scene for months, who didn't need to care what Rich thought of her, because she knew they wouldn't be calling each other ever again except with a catastrophic problem about the renovation. At the end, she crammed his head into her with a fearsome power, her body like a vise, and yelled and yelled, like a butcher going bust in a poker game, and he felt like crying. He could've thrown up. To think he'd done this in the name of love, in the name of freedom, a last fling.

TINTYPE

I can sing my heart out in a wilderness,
or I can engirdle myself
with subterfuge and artifact.
I can sleep on a pallet of straw
or underneath a memento of all I have lost.
I can weep because the date has finally arrived,
or exist apart and not yet go crazy.

Though how can I breathe on the night air,
or clasp the fingertips or kiss the sweet brow.
And how do I say hello, just one more time,
or hello, at last, to the little boy still there on the sleigh
and the lady in the cloche hat next to him deep in the snow.
Now I am old, and the door, I know,
is shut on the future as well as the past.

—*Robert Mazzocco*

Early the next morning, in a French village in the shadow of a nuclear reactor, Emile Marcus tried to buy a sandwich for the long ride to the Loire Valley village of Cravat for the wedding. He'd recently had a small piece of his throat and a chunk of his sinus tissue removed, plus part of his upper lip (a scar ran from his nostril down to his collarbone)—and, sometimes, even now as he spoke to a mustached teen-age boy behind the counter, he felt it impeded his speech. The boy winced. Emile repeated himself, as two young women appeared and asked for the very same sandwich and were served. He spoke a third time as another patron appeared at his left. Emile was staring at a cutting board with some cheese and sliced hard-boiled egg. Is this a joke? he asked himself. He saw himself at the age of this idiot tentatively wielding a baguette. It was the end of the war, and Emile had survived by peddling scorched timber and pieces of broken furniture for firewood—he remembered how badly he'd hoped to escape Europe after the war, everything bombed, sewage everywhere, reeking. It had been a time of particular misery for people like him with even a drop of German blood. He took his hands out of his pockets, dropped his voice, and spoke one last time, slowly, steadily, raving, leaning into it, scaring the kid. He got the sandwich.

He went into the post office to check his mail. He knew how to stride into a place, so people noticed. He had the tall, broad-shouldered bearing of an airline pilot. He wore aviator sunglasses. The collar of his shirt was turned up, and he wore a fine piece of fisherman's netting as a scarf. He had swept-back hair, a corduroy shirt, linen shorts, varicose veins on his legs, and purple feet. He drove a car that smelled like sweat with a wooden steering wheel—cracked and yellow and splintering, like his teeth. He had some clothes in a train case, the sandwich, two cameras in a small silver valise in the back seat; in the coming days, if he became too disgusted, he could go off and photograph something beautiful, a portrait worth money that he would gladly give away to his American "niece," Gynnie. For some reason, the announcement of the wedding had driven him nuts with—what? jealousy? Not exactly. He absolutely would not be able to miss this, but wanted to know why he cared so much. Ever since Gynnie's mother, Martina, called him, he'd been toting up his life, with the excuse that he was trying to calculate how much he could afford to send as a wedding gift, but each time he reached the end of the tally, he found himself in the basement handling his old rifle, wondering if it still worked, thinking about shooting himself. But why? Gynnie was a good girl; she'd always been in his heart despite the miles between them; he'd saved the sweet, empty letters she'd sent over years; he'd showered her with the dresses and jewelry he picked up on photo shoots; Martina kept him updated on her struggles. He thought of her always with a smile.

Also, she was quite possibly the product of his own testicles. The idea made

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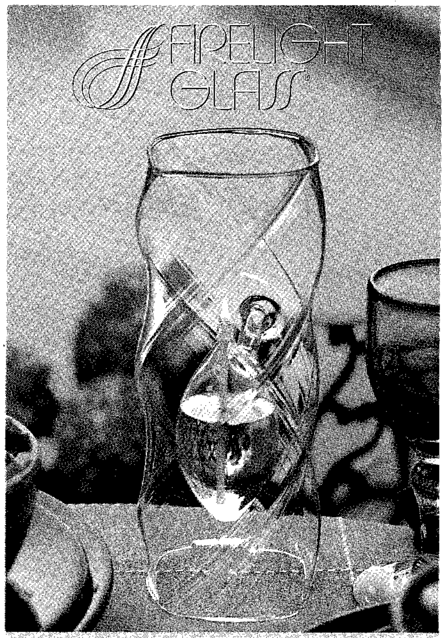

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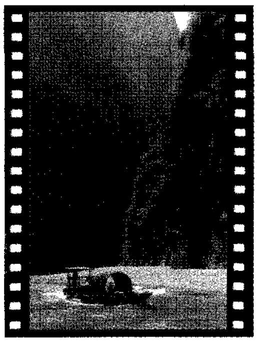

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him lonely, which made him hungry, and he looked at the sandwich. If he ate here at the wheel, he realized, he would get crumbs on his pants.

He'd sent a large check to Gynnie—this was money he needed to live on—partly out of guilt, partly out of longing to be included, partly hoping she'd spend the money on the ceremony and push it over the edge into a freak spectacle of empty American pomposity, that she'd ruin it. He owned one black suit, but noticed, while packing, that it looked all wrong—the top and bottom were two different blacks. After forty years as a photographer, he knew colors of clothing, but somehow he'd lost track, coming and going from that little dump above a darkroom he slept in on his visits to Paris, now that he no longer had his own place there.

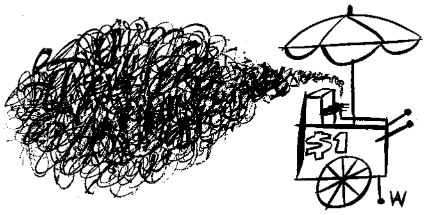
On the road leading out of town, a paper bag flew up onto Emile's windshield, wedged itself under the wiper, and stayed. He drove like that for the next four hours.

Rich drove through the rain to the airport. He was thinking, rubbing his jaw, I did not lie on the floor with her, did not wear out my tongue, did not promise more of that loving treatment.

The women had gone first. Rich's mom, her sisters (four of them), the many girl cousins he'd grown up with, his two beautiful younger sisters, whom he loved—they were all already in France. For weeks the E-mails of the women in his family had been filled with endless logistics—ways to dodge frequent-flyer blackouts, how to wear the same outfit over and over, which underpants you can buy in Paris that they don't sell at Saks. There were fights about who snored too loud to share a hotel room, about how beautiful Rich had looked as a baby, about pets: "If she brings Selma, I bring Fluffy." When Rich couldn't take it anymore, he put them in touch with Martina, on-line, and Martina's Italian, French, Swiss, German, and Spanish aunts, cousins, and nieces joined in, offering ideas to their future in-laws from the States, all using third-grade English, so that the E-mail traffic became a wonderful if somewhat cryptic source of vineyard-stinky-cheese-château-barge-tour-lakeside-yoga-nostril-breathing-retreat suggestions. (During the Second World War, Gynnie's mom's family had got bombed out of their home town, near Strasbourg. Now they hated France and Germany. They'd become anti-nationalist, anti-capitalist missionaries. They'd become shrinks and painters. For some reason, there were no men breathing in that group. The men of Gynnie's family were all in the ground.) Before Rich even saw the French château Martina had been rebuilding, by hand, alone, with her dead husband's money—before he stepped across her front yard of Roman ruins in Cravat—eighteen girls and women, soon-to-be in-laws who had dusted off their high-school accents across seven languages, were already falling in love in their nightgowns. When Rich phoned Gynnie from the airport, he heard his mother in the background, trying to clear her throat, that noise indicating rising excitement. That night, Gynnie had taken a boat ride down the "*Low-arr*"—that was how his mother pronounced it—and they were all still dizzy. Motoring into the sunset, they'd revelled in the colossal mistake the men were making by coming later. Rich was taking the last flight out tonight, Wednesday, to arrive Thursday. His brother and father and best man had let him know that the less time they spent in France the better ("Faggoty, Euro bullshit"). None of them knew French. They weren't interested. They did what men in Rich's family did when they didn't like the odds against them: made fun of it and gave up. They'd be there by dinnertime on Friday.

Rich's plane thumped through the clouds and rain as a hurricane twice the length of Florida moved steadily into the East Coast; it was two hundred miles off North Carolina. Four hours from now, a stretch from Boston to St. Augustine would be in it.

He remembered the fancy engagement party that had been thrown in honor of the bride- and groom-to-be. He'd been so proud of Gynnie, and, while everyone was tripping over each other in their tuxes and long dresses, trying to be charming, Rich wondered lazily to himself about their future together—the subtle closeness they now enjoyed, the fuzzy blurring that washes over the person you have sex with all the time, the need you feel to have her beside you. But then, after the first twenty minutes, he'd stopped talking to Gynnie. He didn't know why (though, sometimes, in front of people, she went into chatty cuckoo mode—"This is the most *amazing* night of my entire life. I love everyone!"). He wanted to kick back, because he felt like it, that was all, and he drank and smoked cigarettes and pot, and kept moving, walking out of a room when she walked in, mocking her in front of her own boss for the sycophantic way she kept repeating his name ("Richie, I'd like you to meet . . ."). He only mocked her in a playful spirit, a way of loosening up the party, but it didn't work, and in the car on the way home she screamed and swung at him, scratching his cornea!—and, as he pulled the car over, she tried to kick him. She was a small person and he'd hoped to bully her. That hadn't worked. He drove home with the other eye, and spent the rest of the summer pre-ejaculating, scared. It seemed like a proximity issue.



Everything was changing so fast. He'd tried to keep some distance between the two of them, in order to slow things down. Which was like trying to stop a bullet with a chocolate-chip cookie.

Rich was trying to get to know her better, because now he was marrying her, but of course he couldn't know her, because now he *was* her, he was turning into a short lady with skirts and buckled shoes, a hundred and eleven pounds, trying to keep it under control. It wasn't her fault, it wasn't his fault, it was both of them. The skin under her armpits broke out from his cheap CVS lotion; her right hip was sore from screwing; her leg became shorter; then her left knee and ankle went wrong because of her leg. See? By his need for sex, he'd sprained a muscle on her hip so that her best shoes were now defunct. She could no longer go to the gym, she could no longer do African dance, she could no longer eat turkey sausages because they gave her gas. "Boys eat that stuff." She dropped so much weight her ass wrinkled. He shared her pain. He slept in a push-up position. He was atrophying, moving as if his feet had been burned, in a shortened stride, like Dr. Locascio, his

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dental surgeon. She was walking like Barney the purple dinosaur: empty smile, her hands clasped in front of her.

Gynnie lay awake, thinking of different, odd moments in her life. The funny gym suit she wore in fourth grade—she unzipped it to go to the bathroom and the top fell in the toilet. Sniffing glue at her friend Dina Whitticomb's Halloween party, the night after her brother died (it took away her sadness). The mugging on 110th Street, when she was at Barnard. The morning of the T.W.A. bombing—after she'd attended an emergency meeting at Langley, then left work with a urinary infection and peed on the floor of a grocery store. She'd only peed a single drop. The grocery store was on P Street!

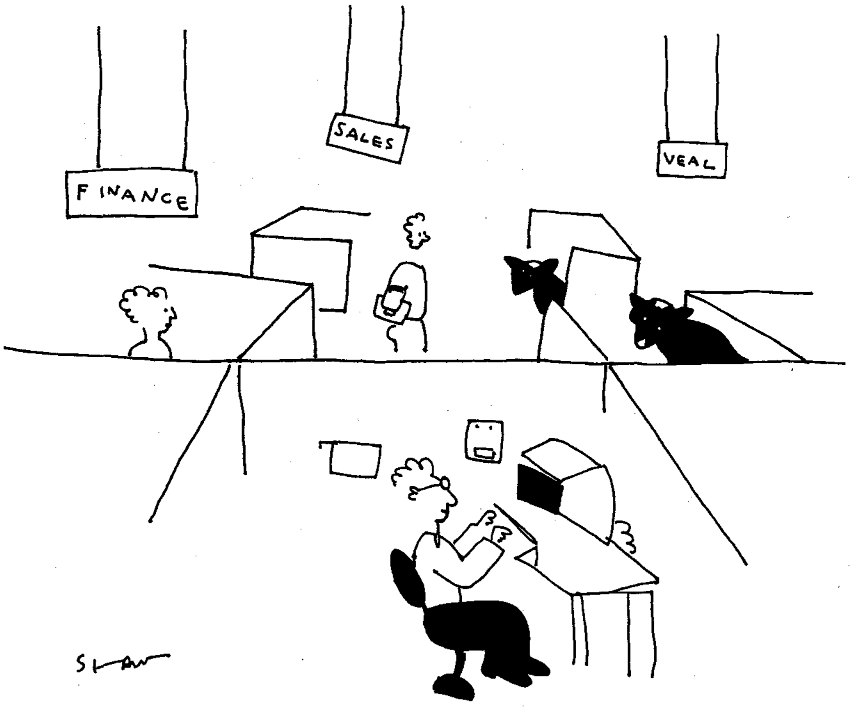
The room was egg-yolk color with fake-marble red streaks, veins. This was "Gynnie's room." Of course it wasn't her room—she had no plans to come back here ever again in her life.

She didn't know what time it was; there was no clock. It was typical of her mother that she'd been able to trick Gynnie into marrying Rich in a house she'd never been in, in a country she didn't know anything about, her mother's "homeland." Why couldn't she get married in the perfectly nice house in Winnetka, where she'd actually grown up?

She never knew her mother spoke German, Swiss, and Dutch, on top of French. She didn't know her mother was descended from a count. She didn't know her mother's family owned metal-machining and ball-bearing factories in Germany during the war. These last few days, drowning in a sea of foreign aunties with all their amazing stories, had been—whatever. She didn't know her mother lived in a stable after the war, didn't know her father was blind in one eye; she'd never met him. Nobody ever told her anything. In regular life, you could go off and figure things out, major things; she knew what recommendations to make to her boss at the Department of State about events developing around the globe, how to respond to Sudanese maniacs, wreaking havoc on their own countrymen; she knew that when three thousand boys turned up in the desert with kwashiorkor from eating leaves after being hunted all winter, it was time to make her case, beg for a U.S. Naval presence off the coast of Somalia.

These were things she could grasp.

But here she was sitting in fucking France, and she didn't know what time it was, had never got the woman on the phone who promised to do her hair Saturday, barely spoke the language, and there was no one here to marry anyway. Two days before her wedding was not the time to be in an awful mood. Gynnie stretched and thought about her former boyfriends, how each of their lives had improved during her tenure, and gone right downhill again after the breakup: one more reason to believe that Rich was the one—his life had not improved at all since they met. She had to admit she loved him the most. No one came close. She believed all the corny stuff about marriage, and it gave her stability to believe it. This was the beginning of mind-blowing time, of a new life, everything was possible. She'd have different hair, shorter, parted on the side but really fluffed up so that it bounced more—her hair was so much better cut short. Which explained everything that had evaded her to this day: she might have been Clinton's first female deputy director of communications if she hadn't had that long, beat, flat, Fiona Apple hair in the interview. Her old haircut was part of her sorrow this morning. If only she'd had this new fluffy haircut before—a person ought to be given more than one big chance in life.



Rich made his way past vineyards, along the Loire, across a broad, fertile plain. Two hours south of Paris he looked up and saw a tiny hilltop village. Among the trees stood an enormous château owned by a famous Champagne family. Beside it, one small, black spire jabbed up at the sky—Gynnie's mother's house.

The road corkscrewed around the hilltop through narrow streets crowded with tourists drinking outdoors, riding motorbikes, dressed in soccer jerseys, taking photos.

It *was* a romantic place—an old château, tilting down the hill, made of sand-colored stucco, with climbing wisteria, a birdbath entwined by roses, a rusted scythe, an old woman staring out her second-story window across the street, the oaken smell of burning twigs in the vineyard nearby.

And there they were: the women. Their faces, their hunger, you could see it in their eyes, the wedding-bell crap, a whole life of internally wired excitement. They were waiting for Rich, looking like they wanted to eat him. All the girls and women who'd been in his life forever were moving toward him even before the car came to a stop, grabbing and kissing him. There were his many aunts and cousins—he had nine girl cousins, and seven were here with their mothers. His sweet little sister appeared, Connie, who ran out the door, arms flung open, as if to say, "I have always loved you uncontrollably, we are in a strange place, you and me. Hold me." Then his other little sister, Jenny, ran out the door, and he did the same thing with her. Everyone was wearing lip gloss. Some pretty girls with long hair appeared, speaking something other than English, pulling at his bags, falling down. The other women smiled at their clowning. Like girls in a dormitory who had begun menstruating together, the group was operating through some kind of primal communication.

He hugged his mother. Mommy, where am I? he wanted to say. Neither of them could speak. She seemed ashamed and agitated. Staring at her, Rich suddenly remembered his dream from hours earlier on the airplane; he'd slept soundly, and not until this instant—not after waking, not while driving—had this wild, foggy, sweet dream from the plane come back to him, of screwing his mother. "I can't believe it's you, Mom," he kept saying in the dream, but it was her, and it was impossibly good. The image of it stung him, and he froze, baffled, and forced it from his mind.

He asked where Gynnie was, and ten people said at once that she was napping and not to wake her.

Rich shook hands with Emile Marcus—the only other man in this place. Emile's hand was big and warm, weathered smooth, like a baseball mitt left in the sun. Emile said something Rich couldn't understand. After fifteen minutes of greetings, Rich's mother and his sisters moved him toward the house. His mother said she'd be wearing all black for the wedding, and wondered if that pleased him. She began describing the dress. He looked across the old sloping rooftops of the town, the cobblestone streets, out onto the valley, and felt like he was in a Three Musketeers movie.

Gynnie lay on the bed, propped up, reading *Shape* magazine. On her arrival in Paris, she stopped at a department-store makeup counter, and since then had been doing an Asian thing with her look. Hair pulled up tightly in barrettes so her eyes narrowed like an Eskimo's, eyeliner pencil, short kimono robe. She made no move to get up, and said hello in a whisper. Rich leaned over and hugged her. He could feel her warm body through the kimono. Her toenails were painted to match the eye shadow. She smelled like flowers; he smelled like B.O.

He was too tired to shower. Transition to a French person complete.

Rich unzipped his suitcase. "That's your side of the room, those are your drawers," she said. Rich pulled out some clothes and looked at them. "Why are we doing this?" he said.

She sighed, spent. "Why?" Did she have to answer this question for him, too? "Because we're desperate and we're lonely and nothing better came along." She felt small and tired and afraid. "You're all I've got now, and you'd better get used to it. We're on the grownup train, and we don't get off until the graveyard."

Rich held up his folded shirts. He said he was talking about the clothes. As in, "Why not leave them in the suitcase and forget the dresser?"

Gynnie moved to a chair in the corner and opened a book on French castles. She was breathing with so much difficulty—so shallowly, so infrequently—that she looked like she was suspended in formaldehyde. At home, over the last six months, when she felt bad, her mind had travelled to French castles, to the French Language Institute classes she never made because of work, to the tapes she didn't listen to in the car, to the photographs of this house and yard. In the hallucination, she slipped sidewise into the postcard-perfect photo she kept in her Filofax, met farmers who wore weathered berets made of beaver pelts, and told stories of Martina as a girl jumping in haystacks, never mentioned the bombing raids, gang rapes by Russian soldiers, Hitler's need for steel ball bearings. Now, actually being here in France, where could she imagine herself?

Out back, Rich's mother and Martina were standing together, arms folded, contemplative. They were considering what might jazz up the ceremony, using their advanced degrees in, respectively, the Bala Institute's Fire and Water Six-Week Breathing Course and contemporary American art. Rich's mother suggested taking what appeared to be a small broom, made out of sage, lighting

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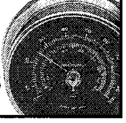

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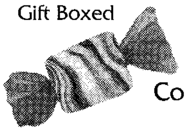

it, and as it smoldered swinging it overhead—it was a Native American tradition—in a light, swaying, nineteen-forties Camp-Hialeah-Gitchee-Goomee hula style, across the entire wedding party, to cleanse them psychically.

Gynnie came out with sunglasses on and sat by the wall with her feet up on a paint can, checking her pedicure. In the sunlight, Rich thought she looked like she needed a blood transfusion. Since he'd stepped outside, he'd picked up on a distinct earthy smell that reminded him of semen.

Rich's mother walked over and said, "Do you want to eat the best cookie you ever had in your life?" She stared into his face for a long second and grabbed it and kissed him on the mouth. She said he was a "beautiful, lovely boy."

Rich said, "What the heck is that smell?"

"It's the tree," his aunt Patti said. It had long green flowers that looked like peapods.

He watched it shake in the breeze as people walked around the corner to the patio for lunch.

He sat beneath the tree on a long bench; it was a pew of some fine hard wood that had been left out in the rain for centuries. Everything in the yard was like this: old, alive, in use. He sat wondering, as he heard his mother and aunts and cousins talking in loud, terrible French, how the events of his life had led him to this pew, as if he'd had even the smallest role in getting himself here.

Emile Marcus walked out, wearing swim trunks. Rich, sitting beneath the tree that smelled like semen, was overjoyed to have another man here. He pointed out the view. Emile walked over with a wide, stiff gait, and sat down on the pew.

"Everything is O.K.?"

"Yeah." Rich smiled pathetically.

You needed a little bit of swagger if you were going to embark on a real voyage, Emile thought; there was no swagger, no courage showing in this kid. He tried some local wisdom, spoken slowly, so even an American could understand: "*La moor ay oon meestair shee-ont.*" Which meant, "Love is a stinking mystery."

Rich said, "The what?"

Emile was still silently distressed over that other mystery of love. *Was* Gynnie his daughter? The question pricked him constantly now that he was here. That summer, Martina had come to France with her cancerous husband, and they stayed in Emile's bed. He and Martina went to art museums, leaving the dying man behind, walked everywhere, cooked; he made portraits of her; on the last night of her visit she tiptoed downstairs and tried to steal the window fan beside him to cure the stifling heat. In the shock of the moment, he confessed his true feelings. Maybe she had sex with him for the fan. Maybe she gave in to him because he loved her, because her husband was croaking, because she needed a good screwing, and he let her have it with no expectation of any love in return. He was pretty sure he'd "seeded the soil," but then became furious at her for the vague, obnoxious shrugs, when he'd politely demanded to know, in letters, or while visiting the States, even standing on this very spot this morning. "Tell me who I am," he said to her. "I need to know."

"Oh please," she said. "You're ridiculous."

She made him feel like garbage. Sitting beside Rich, Emile realized he had been crying all his life. It was all because of a woman. The woman is the worst creature on the face of the earth.

"We get drunk tonight," Emile said.

Rich said, "O.K."

"You love her?"

"Yes."

Emile said, "I give you one advice: Try to fuck her as much as you can."

Gynnie sat at the long table beside her cousin Chantal, who nursed her son, Jean-Louis. Jean-Louis was three years old. Gynnie asked Chantal, "Does that ever hurt?"

Chantal spoke through her sixteen-year-old cousin, Elena, a deeply tanned girl with wide-set eyes and an awkwardly bulging nose, wearing a red bikini. "First time, she cried. He's biting. But then her body feels good."

Chantal's mother-in-law, Marie, across the table, glanced up, her mouth full of food, and said, "She like it," and went back to eating. Chantal smiled and said, "So." She patted her baby's hair. He lay there, squeezing her breast like a rubber horn bulb, a little bit of milk on his face, staring at the women at the table, looking at him.

Gynnie pointed at his head and said, "I want one of those."

She hadn't touched any food herself, and when Marie looked up again and said, "Bride, eat," and drummed Gynnie's plate with her dirty fork, Gynnie said, "You're all so kind to worry about me," and then thought, Fuck you, cow. Everyone thinks I'm an idiot.

Rich came over and sat between Gynnie and Chantal; he took some knockwurst and bread. Gynnie wished he'd sat somewhere else. When he reached across her, his armpit smelled. She wished he were staying at the neighbor's. He belonged here, in the bride's mother's house, less than anyone. She said, "You smell." He said he knew. She watched him shove down a knockwurst.

Gynnie ate yogurt, the best yogurt she'd eaten in her life. She ate pâté with capers on black bread, and salami and croissants and jelly and cake, and drank half a pot of espresso, until she could feel it coming out her eyeballs, and then she went into the bathroom in their yellow bedroom and threw up, and cleaned the toilet and put on the old maroon terry-cloth robe that had been her mother's for twenty years and lay down on the floor beside the bathtub that had been crammed into the alcove next to the linen closet and cried.

Rich, meanwhile, cut himself more knockwurst. He was disturbed by Chantal's son; he couldn't recall ever having seen a child with the ability to speak while still nursing. The three-year-old stared at Rich, drunkenly. Around the table, they were speaking Italian, Dutch, Swiss-German, French, eating chocolate and fruit, drinking black coffee, smoking. Connie and two of his older cousins had been to Annick Goutal, in Paris, and they smelled of flowers and fruit. The Swiss girls, Lily and Josephine, were braiding each other's hair.

Chantal's face had a look of infantile fascination, watching the baby watch Rich. She also had, you couldn't help noticing, the most beautiful, full, soft, sweetly moving jugs he'd ever seen, like balloons plumped to the point of ripeness with a golden milky essence.

Rich's sisters smiled at him, trying to get his attention. He winked back. In a way, this place was a kind of heaven. He sat in the seat of all goodness, receiving perfection.

At that exact moment, Nora Garleck would be on the other side of the Atlantic, hearing the pros and cons of a concrete sidewalk storm channel, walking through the very basement Rich had befouled with her the night before. Never again, he thought, picturing himself getting abused by her, face down, in the dirt. "Bye-bye, you big horse."

His mother recalled Rich at Jean-Louis's age. "He loved Popeye," she said, out loud, without thinking. "Should we sing 'Popeye the Sailorman'?" His mother adored him with limitless intensity. But there was something in the way his mother stared at him that had always had this effect—some piece inside, some shelf that supported his heart and lungs, just liquefied. Oh, when would he ever grow out of this slavery? Maybe it was the jet lag kicking in, or from eating too quickly. He tried shoving a bunch of grapes into his mouth, and then got up and moved slowly, making his way through the dark, cold, six-hundred-year-old halls of the house to the bedroom. He went into the bathroom and closed the door and locked it and pulled his pants down and sat on the toilet, thinking, Thank God I'm marrying Gynnie and not my mother. Gynnie is perfect for me. Gynnie is cool in every way.

From behind the bathtub where Gynnie lay quietly sobbing she heard Rich enter. She'd been thinking, until his oafish, dirty sneakers stomped through her moment of healing, that this would all be over soon enough.

Rich let out the kind of gas that can only be produced by a queasy overnight ocean crossing, squeezed into a coach seat, drinking free suds and wine, igniting that first bellyful of French smorgasbord.

Gynnie sat up and shouted, "What are you doing?"

Rich sat there stunned. He said, "I'm in here! Where did you come from?" He looked at the door he'd locked from inside. On top of his confusion, he could see she'd been sobbing so hard her eyelids looked like walnuts. And when had she ditched her silk kimono for her mom's ratty bathrobe?

She said, "Why do you have to do that in here!"

"Where else am I gonna go?" he

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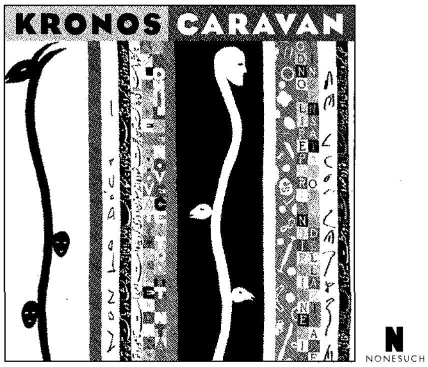

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“Are you telling me you won’t even ask the computerized navigational system for directions?”

yelled, and tried to pull his pants up.

“I don’t care.” She stood in front of him. “Get out of here!” They were the only people in the house, and every window was wide open; everybody out on the patio heard them screaming. Is this marriage? he thought, running out. Is this typical of what goes on from this point? He held his pants up with one hand, grabbed a magazine in the foyer, and finished his crap down the hall.

In the morning, Rich’s mother sat at the kitchen table, speaking to his father on the phone. Martina had brought out a tiny television to watch the report of the storm in the States. After spending the night on the Newark-airport floor, Rich’s father and brother and his best friend took the advice of the Air France representative and drove four hundred miles through the torrent to Cleveland, Ohio, and when they got there Cleveland was closed, too. Rich could overhear his father’s voice, as though it were coming through a garden hose, lashing out that no one had insured the plane ticket.

She handed Rich the phone, shaking her head, secretly happy that Rich’s father wouldn’t be coming.

“Why that cocksucker at the ticket counter didn’t tell us sooner is beyond my comprehension,” his father said. Anytime Rich’s father used the word “cocksucker,” he was past caring. Like a lot of people, he’d already let Rich know that staging this thing in Europe was a classic, small-minded act of selfishness. His father sang the French national anthem in made-up French words, wished him luck, and hung up. Rich called his machine at home, checked his messages; they told the same story—cancelled flights, no apologies. No one else was coming.

When he stepped outside, his aunts were drinking coffee, not talking. Everybody had already heard. Finally his aunt Irene said, “What a shame,” in an attempt to mimic real outcry, and then his aunt Patti and his cousins Shelley and Tina agreed, Tina scowling slightly, but then she asked, “Does anyone want the last chocolate biscotti? Biscotto?” The sky was gorgeous—a few huge, flat-bottomed clouds plaqued against the blue-black sky; he could see far out into the valley.

What struck Rich, as his mom picked up half of a croissant and offered it to the baby, was the calm. No one else spoke. The disappointment of being marooned here without half the wedding party? His aunt Irene put her feet up on the table and leaned her head back and closed her eyes, like a girl on vacation. Nobody cared that the husbands weren’t coming. The “air” being breathed here was the air of relief. About two hundred years of accumulated married bliss among Rich’s mom, her four sisters, and his cousins fell away like a scab with no sign of injury beneath it. They were discussing the impact of Oprah.

Marriage sucked, he thought. You get married for what, again?

His mom went around the driveway on Martina’s bicycle, pedalled back, and said, “How about for lunch we have a picnic?”

Fuck all of you, Rich thought. I’m not gonna be like this.

This was his mother, making the best of her miserable marriage. Planning a picnic, O.D.’ing on Cepacol lozenges, watching public television when things got hairy—hunchback, face-lift, elastic-waist jeans, yessing Rich’s blowhard dad, doing her needlepoint, unable to order her own meal in a restaurant, trying to sound brightly engaged in her nonspeaking role in the community theatre’s “The Music Man,” bragging about their view from the living room back home.

They had dinner in the back yard, by candlelight, beneath a row of linden trees. Some neighbors came to fill the empty seats. They drank local wine from a wooden drum.

Emile sat beside Gynnie, half-heartedly trying to calm her suspicions about Martina’s family’s complicity during the war. He knew what she was getting at.

We had our own Holocaust in the Alsace, he wanted to tell her. We didn’t have time to worry about the fucking Poles working in your grandfather’s factory in Ulm.

He wanted to give her more money. He wanted to have her blood tested, he wanted to hold her. Why did he come? The past is a cold, dry potato, and you try to heat it up.

Rich sat beside them. He and Gynnie weren’t speaking. He revolted her right now. Her makeup was off, her face was ashen, her hair hung like fishing line. He took a good look at what he was marrying. A few years earlier, she'd had both of her front teeth knocked out in a waterskiing accident; they'd been glued back in but they were "dead," that's how she referred to them. They were the wrong color. Rich wondered about other dead parts.

Later, after Gynnie went off to bed without saying good night, Rich sat in a chaise on the patio, Jean-Louis asleep across his lap, Chantal sleeping on the other chaise, in the dim candlelight. Were the ways we revolt each other infinite?

Emile sat down with a glass of wine. He was disappointed, he said. He had thought Rich was going to make a speech tonight. He was too sad to explain what he meant, too tired to translate his thoughts: A man is an eagle, he soars, he rules over everything, he makes life happen, he opens her up, he shows the way, he guides her, he worships and cajoles and charms and pays and kisses and protects and fixes and demands.

Great speech, Emile thought, you drunk idiot. Can't even talk, never even got married, too hung up on a woman you screwed once.

Emile placed a wine cork in the candle flame until it was burning, and pulled it out and blew out the flame on the end of the cork, and although it appeared to be smoldering, he grabbed Rich by the back of the head and pressed the cork against Rich's face, wiping it on him. The cork had become charcoal. Emile said, "You look like a baby," and tried to explain that, with his baby face, maybe what Rich needed was a mustache. He thought it would make the kid distinguished-looking.

Rich smelled the burning cork, the wine on Emile's breath, the scent of mothballs from the old man's sweater. "What did I ever do to you?" Rich asked, put down the baby, and got up and walked inside.

Emile sat there stunned. He meant to be the kid's ally.

Gynnie was awake. She looked at this dirt on Rich's face. She was sorry. She imagined him, for a moment, more mature, with a dark black mustache and beard, a father to her children, a hardened understanding of real responsibility.

She said, "Are you mad at me?"

He said, "Are you?"

She said, "You're the best thing that ever happened to me in my life." She waited for him to speak. "The only good thing."

"Are you kidding?"

By the time Rich lay down beside Gynnie, they were both feeling that fighting was humiliating. They put their faces together and talked and after five minutes they felt lucky and ashamed and were able to kiss. Was this the time and place for him to confess? Confess what, though? Sometimes a secret, if you contain it, provides its own deliberate absolution. The amount of work and excitement and well-wishing had overwhelmed them. By the time they were making love, they'd quit talking. In the sudden silence you could hear the entire house listening. Everyone knew what was happening. There was an indescribable click—it was from the slats of the bed, the wood being bowed in rhythm. The floor also repeated a faint noise.

It was agreed, of course, that pretty soon they'd be fighting again, and whatever came after that would be hard enough. Aunt Patti, who'd been through two divorces, thought this reminded her of her first one. So: the bride and groom were screwing. Good for them. They had the house's good wishes.

When the two of them got tired doing it one way, Rich fell over, and they did it sidewise. After a while, they rested, and then resumed. They were, by now, on to higher stuff. Their coming was still on hold, prolonged to make them both nuts. There was some moaning. Their own moaning was exciting to both of them and to their aunts and mothers and relatives, who were still up drinking wine and stood outside their window, listening.

And then Rich and Gynnie were done, and they lay there, their warm bodies against the old cold wall. At the end, they'd done it so hard—Rich fucked Gynnie so hard he forgot he was marrying her. ♦

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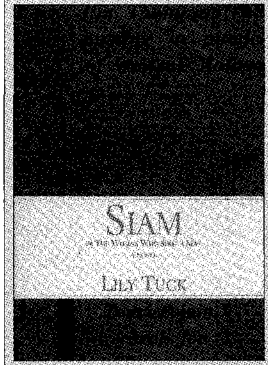

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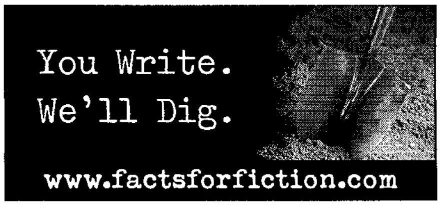
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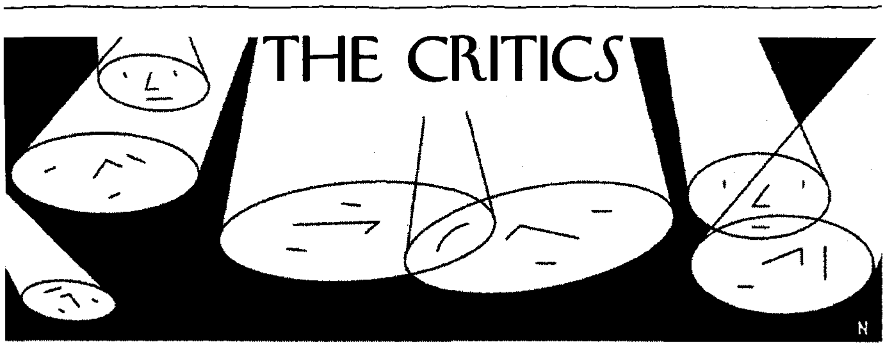


THE CRITICS

BOOKS

THE EMPTY COUCH

What is lost when psychiatry turns to drugs?

BY JOAN ACOCELLA

In one of the psychiatric wards where T. M. Luhrmann did research for her new book, "Of Two Minds: The Growing Disorder in American Psychiatry" (Knopf; $26.95), there was a patient who enjoyed going into the common room in the evening and telling the other patients how she tortured animals: "She told them that she liked to stick pins into rats' eyes and listen to them squeal, that she would chop them up and drink their squirting blood." Once she had all the other patients crying, she would go back to her room and turn in for the night. When the attending doctor spoke to her about this, he did not try to find out if she actually tortured animals, let alone why. He just told her to stop disrupting the ward. " 'If you feel like you want to harm animals . . . and you need some help controlling those thoughts, tell us,' he said. 'Otherwise, don't tell us, because no hospital can legally discharge you if you do.' " She stopped, and, in keeping with the current trend toward short hospitalization, probably soon went home. This was a "biomedical" ward, as are most psychiatric units these days, and in such a place the doctors no longer explore with you why you think and act as you do. Biomedical psychiatrists regard mental disorders as "heart attacks in the brain" (Luhrmann's phrase), and they no more expect you to explain such an event than if you had had a heart attack in the heart. On admission to the hospital, you are swiftly diagnosed and medicated. Then, once you have stopped threatening suicide or hearing voices—a process that takes maybe five to ten days—you are given a bottle of pills and discharged. Chances are you will be back soon.

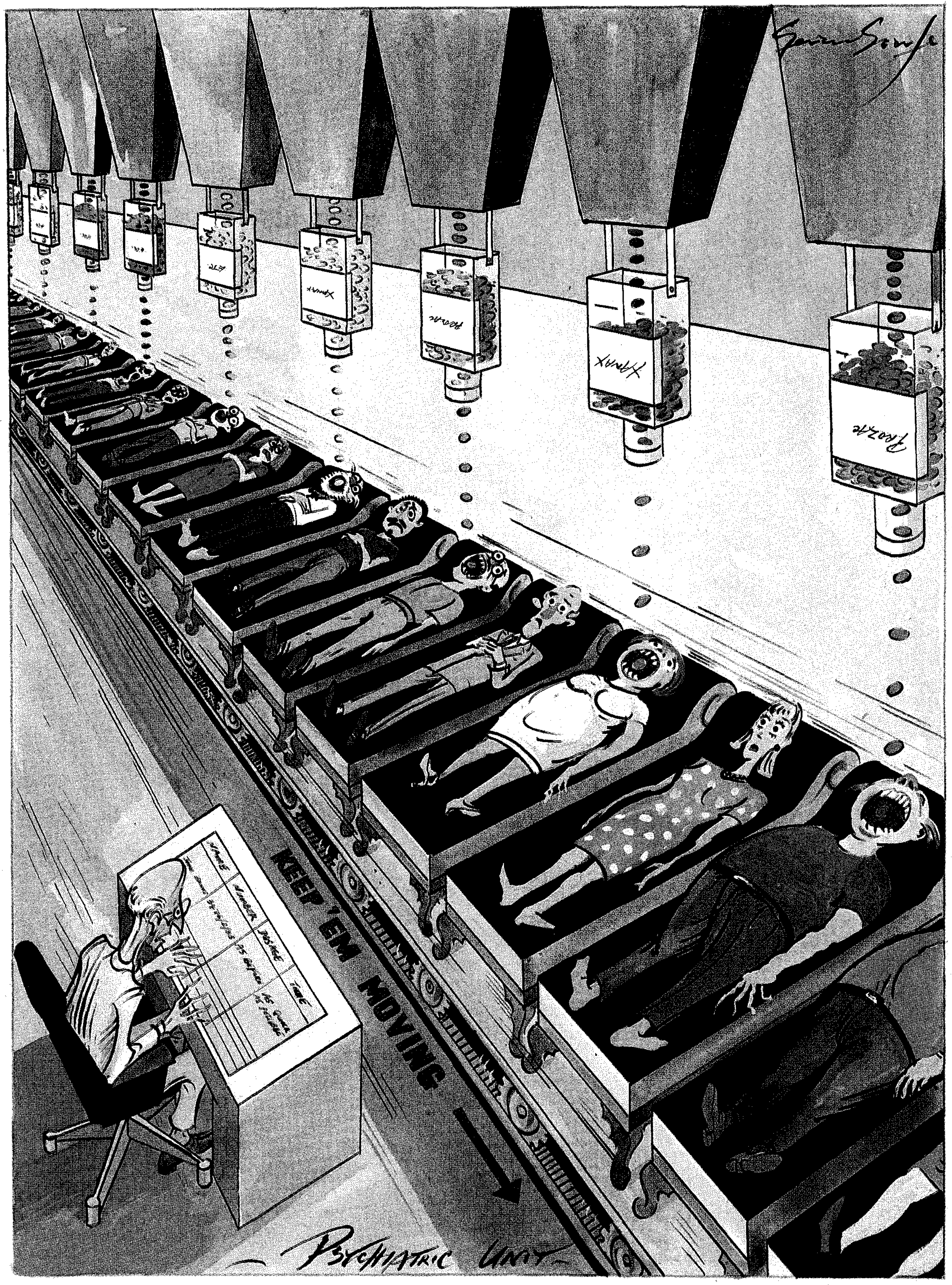
For about a decade now, since the introduction of Prozac, in 1988, and the articles and books on it in the early nineties, the general public has known about the split between psychodynamic and biomedical psychiatry, which in outpatient terms means the choice, when depression or anxiety returns, of either going back to the psychotherapist for another year or getting your regular doctor to give you a prescription for Prozac or Xanax. People also know, if they have read the *Time* and *Newsweek* articles—and maybe Peter Kramer's 1993 "Listening to Prozac," which has sold more than half a million copies in the United States alone—about the philosophical implications of the two approaches: how on the one, psychodynamic hand, you are in large measure stuck with your fate but also responsible for it, and how on the other, psychopharmacological hand, you don't have a fate, you have a system of neurotransmitters, for which you are not responsible and with which you aren't stuck, since, thanks to drugs, you can adjust it. To partisans of the psychodynamic view, the new, drug-based psychiatry is taking the morals, the dignity, the truth out of human life. To the drug doctors, all that is being eliminated is the junk pile of unexamined assumptions descended from Sigmund Freud.

"Of Two Minds" addresses the controversy differently. Luhrmann, a professor of anthropology at the University of California at San Diego, comes to psychiatry the way Margaret Mead went to Samoa. That is, she approaches it as a culture, a collection of beliefs and practices which young people are socialized into. She follows a number of psychiatrists-to-be through their training and watches how they get "processed" by the contingencies of their culture—how, in the end, what is called theory is actually a canny balancing of conviction with the need to survive. In the process she provides a more nuanced treatment of the moral and philosophical issues than any previous discussion I know of.

As Luhrmann sees it, almost everything about psychiatric trainees' experience pushes them into the biomedical camp. Medical school, to start with, teaches them to separate their feelings from their patients, and the psychiatric residency drives that lesson home. Residents are given lectures and training in psychotherapy, but there is a none too subtle deëmphasis of that part of their education in favor of the biomedical work of diagnosis and medication. Then they graduate and take jobs in places that, increasingly, have nothing to do with psychotherapy. Luhrmann spent a week studying an institution she calls San Juan County Hospital, in northern California. On its psychiatric unit there were two women married to God, and another, pregnant with her ninth child—her previous eight were living with relatives or in foster homes—who called herself Shirley Temple. ("Look," she would say, pinching her arms, "the hospital hasn't helped. I'm still black.") One man, on arrival at the hospital, reported that he had no hallucinations, "except for the Devil." His problem was that he hadn't taken food or drink for six days. This was his fourteenth admission. Many of the other patients were also what the staff called "frequent fliers"—a fact that was unquestionably due in part to the conditions in which they lived on the outside. Most were poor; many, upon release, used crack or alcohol to control their symptoms.

The staff tried to address these people's "psychosocial" problems; they held meetings with them to talk about substance abuse and living skills, but in the eight days that was the average length of admission there was little they could do. Luhrmann says she once ran such

GERALD SCARFE

Gerald Scarfe
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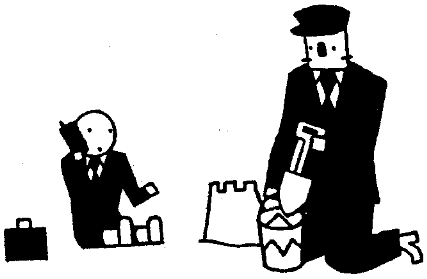
a meeting. When the patients spoke, "which was not so often, they talked about how it was more difficult to get to one prison than to another and how when their son came home on probation they really hoped he wouldn't keep a gun in his car the way he had last time." If social problems are hard to solve in a week, emotional problems don't have a chance. The man who was starving himself reported that his father had died three weeks earlier: "Several times he started a sentence with 'My father' but couldn't complete it." The resident who admitted him did not draw him out; she didn't have time. The purpose of the unit was simply containment, for the sickest patients in their sickest periods, and once they were discharged they were not supposed to return too soon. Those who keep coming back may find themselves taking a vacation courtesy of the local authorities. "In southern California," Luhrmann reports, "patients would show up in the psychiatric emergency room and explain that they had been in Minnesota or Illinois and had gone to the bus station and a nice man from the county mental health had bought them a bus ticket to San Diego, which they thought they'd like to visit."

Many writers who take on the current state of our psychiatric hospitals side with the patients, and demonize the psychiatrists. The wonderful thing about Luhrmann's book is that she demonizes no one. Young psychiatrists, she says, start out idealistic (even more so these days, when managed care has reduced their earning power). Then they start cutting their losses. Diagnosis, which they begin doing as residents, is the first lesson in hospital Realpolitik. Diagnosing means looking at a person who typically presents a complicated, ambiguous picture—"They're sad, they're not sleeping too well, their wife just left them," as one resident summarized it—and, within a matter of minutes, marking him down as having one of the conditions listed in the American Psychiatric Association's "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders," or D.S.M. These conditions, in keeping with the so-called medical model—which holds that psychological disorders are like, or are, organic disorders—come described as consisting of certain "symptoms," which add up to a certain "syndrome." Then, again in keeping with the medical model, the psychiatrist prescribes medication. These actions have good short-term results. The patient, given the medication, settles down. The insurer, given the diagnosis (it is required), pays for the treatment, thereby keeping the hospital out of bankruptcy. So young psychiatrists go on doing these things, and as they do they come to *look* for symptoms that fit D.S.M. diagnoses, and for which medications are available. Then they go to work in hospitals where there is no time to do psychotherapy, so why bother even thinking about the matters that psychotherapy addresses—hope, discouragement, truth or untruth to oneself? Thus psychiatrists learn to work within the biomedical system, and to believe in it, if they don't want their lives to be anguish. Touchingly, Luhrmann reports that many of them haven't learned, and that their lives are anguish. They know what it is that they are ignoring, and they feel they have broken trust with their patients. "They feel like bad people."

Where did the biomedical approach come from? From Hippocrates, at the latest. For a couple of millennia now, the pendulum of psychiatry has been swinging between organic and psychological/spiritual explanations. In the late nineteenth century, organic causation was the dominant theory. Then it was shoved aside by Freud. Psychoanalysis took a while to conquer the United States, but once it did, after the Second World War, its dominance was unquestioned, and its arrogance breathtaking. Schizophrenia, autism, and numerous other disorders were blamed on the mother, with no evidence, just utter certainty. The public accepted this, to the great disadvantage of patients, not to speak of mothers. Then, gradually, it was shown that schizophrenia had a strong genetic component, that autistic children had demonstrable neurological deficits, and so on. In other words, biomedical theory rose because there was science to support it. It also had humanitarian appeal: if mental disorders were biological, patients shouldn't be blamed for them, shouldn't be stigmatized. That the return of the biomedical approach also occurred within the context of the despiritualization of our society after the sixties, that it fit in so well with the abandonment of any value that was not commercially profitable (as psychotherapy apparently was not, and drugs were): these facts were noticed by some but, in the re-scientific atmosphere of those times, they did not amount to a strong argument.



It was in the late seventies that the first generation of convinced biomedical psychiatrists got out of school. Still, many of them felt that psychological disorders involved *both* organic vulnerability and learning, and that, whatever the cause, most patients needed both biological and psychological treatment. (Even if a disorder is wholly biological, patients need psychological therapy to repair the consequences—their wrecked marriages, their hiatus-filled résumés.) So in most wards some psychiatrists gave drugs, some gave psychotherapy, and the system chugged forward.

Then came managed care. Luhrmann is so fair that she is even fair to managed care. By 1990, she notes, expenditures on health care in the United States had exceeded six hundred billion dollars, more than twelve per cent of the gross national product. Something had to be done, but what was done was brutal, above all in mental health. (General medical benefits dropped by 7.4 per cent, but mental-health benefits were cut by half.) In the mid-nineteen-nineties, Luhrmann revisited a large teaching hospital where she had done field work a few years earlier. The experience, she says, was like "coming back to a tree-lined London neighborhood after the Blitz." Services had been reduced to a minimum. Psychotherapy was gone altogether, except for certain, very circumscribed groups. (For example, trauma patients. Is this why therapists are now so interested in psychological trauma, and so likely to diagnose it?) Most patients don't have a prayer of discussing their dead father, or even their living circumstances. In all this slash-and-burn, it is not clear that there has been any substantial cost saving, for with the elimination of psychotherapy—and the stepped-up speed of discharge—readmission rates have risen. Especially important in the financial picture, it seems, is the provision of *outpatient* psychotherapy, as the Champus Insurance Company, for example, discovered when it expanded outpatient psychiatric coverage between 1989 and 1992. It "gained a net saving of $200 million because its customers' hospitalization rate dropped sharply. For every dollar spent on psychotherapy, four dollars were saved." There are few things more expensive than hospitalization, and, strange to say, it can be prevented in many cases by a little talk once a week with an interested person.

"Of Two Minds" concentrates on inpatient care, but there is a parallel crisis going on in outpatient treatment, and that is the subject of "Prozac Backlash: Overcoming the Dangers of Prozac, Zoloft, Paxil, and Other Antidepressants with Safe, Effective Alternatives" (Simon & Schuster; $25), by the Harvard Medical School psychiatrist Joseph Glenmullen. Twenty million people are now on Prozac, not to mention the millions who are taking other SSRIs (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors), such as Paxil and Zoloft. Meanwhile, insurance support for outpatient psychotherapy has been cut off at the knees. In Glenmullen's view, this constitutes an outrage, not just because people need psychotherapy but because the drugs that have replaced it are potentially dangerous.

There's a saying among psychiatrists that you should always prescribe a new drug right away, "while it still works"—in other words, while the doctor and the patient still believe in it, thus giving it the placebo effect—because many popular medications, once they hit the market, enter what Glenmullen calls the "10-20-30" cycle. After ten years, people start noticing problems with the drug, problems that the manufacturer vigorously denies. After twenty years, the problems become clearer, and physicians start sounding the alarm. After thirty years, the regulatory agencies step in, and often the drug is withdrawn from the market. Surprise—by then the patent has expired, and the manufacturer no longer has a financial interest in the drug. But the company has a new drug, said to be newly effective, newly free of side effects, and the 10-20-30 cycle begins again. This has happened many times, but only in accelerated cases—for example, the recent fen-phen scandal—does it seem to get noticed by the press, and hence by the public.

Prozac, too, is running a shorter cycle. (The new, "improved" version is already in the works.) By 1994, the psychiatrist Peter Breggin and his wife, Ginger Ross Breggin, had published "Talking Back to Prozac," in which they claimed that the drug was having dire side effects. Glenmullen's book is in some measure just an update, but in the intervening six years more research has accumulated, and some of it is frightening.

By "Prozac backlash," Glenmullen does not mean the response of the public; he means the response of the brain—above all, of the dopamine system—to what the SSRIs are doing to the serotonin system. A number of studies have found that about sixty per cent of SSRI users experience sexual dysfunction: decreased libido, decreased arousal, delayed orgasm. (Or, in rare cases, they may have a "paradoxical" response. A 1989 paper in the *Journal of Clinical Psychopharmacology* described the case of a woman who, upon having her Prozac dose increased, began experiencing spontaneous orgasms for most of each morning, a circumstance that, not surprisingly, was said to be "interfering with normal activity.") Another complication is that some people, when suddenly put on a high dose of Prozac—for years, the manufacturer marketed the capsules in only one dose, a high dose (twenty milligrams), so as to make the drug simpler for primary-care physicians to prescribe, thus cutting out the specialist, thus pleasing the H.M.O.s—have committed suicide or homicide. Pharmaceutical companies have done what they could to minimize such findings. (The literature enclosed with Prozac still states the incidence of sexual side effects as two to five per cent of depressed patients taking the drug.) And they have had the help of many supposedly independent psychopharmacologists publishing research on the SSRIs—or not publishing it, if the

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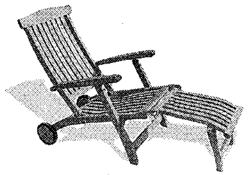

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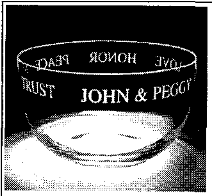
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drug company, having funded the study, doesn't like the findings. According to Glenmullen, the only reason we know about the widespread sexual difficulties of SSRI users is that the research was paid for by the manufacturers of Serzone and Wellbutrin, competing, non-SSRI antidepressants that had lesser sexual side effects. (Don't change your prescription. Glenmullen reports that, at least in the case of Wellbutrin, gains in the short run may peter out in the long run: "I have now seen a number of patients who lost interest in sex, even developed an aversion to it, after being on Wellbutrin long-term.")

That's not the end of the side effects. There are also motor problems: tics, muscle spasms, agitation. In patients on SSRIs Glenmullen has seen "fly-catcher tongue-darting" and "chewing-the-cud jawing." Others have seen "involuntary pelvic thrusting." Interestingly, these symptoms resemble the motor abnormalities that began to develop in hospitalized schizophrenics after the introduction of the so-called major tranquillizers, such as Thorazine, in the fifties. Because those problems developed only slowly and were often masked by the very drugs that caused them, the extent of the damage did not become clear for years. Now we know that between twenty and thirty per cent of patients on major tranquillizers develop tardive dyskinesia, a Parkinson's-like movement disorder. In about half of those cases, tardive dyskinesia is irreversible; the symptoms do not go away when the patient is taken off the drug. Considering the tics and spasms that are turning up in SSRI takers—on which, it should be added, there seem to be no good figures yet (Glenmullen says things like "Mild to moderate spasms may affect as many as 10 percent of patients")—some doctors are worried that Prozac and its cousins may likewise be causing "silent brain damage," the effects of which will not become clear for years, perhaps not until the patient reaches old age.

A recent issue of *Brain Research* reported on a study in which rats were given high doses of either Prozac or Zoloft for four days. Afterward, their brain cells showed "swollen axon terminals, thick axons and corkscrew-like profiles." Corkscrew-like profiles! The drug doses, it should be said, were very high, ten to a hundred times the therapeutic dose for human beings. On the other hand, the rats took the drugs for only four days, whereas millions of human beings have been on SSRIs for years. Madhu Kalia, who directed the study, says, "We don't know if the cells are dying. . . . These effects may be transient and reversible. Or they may be permanent." If they are permanent, and turn up in human beings as well as in rats, the law courts are going to be an interesting sight in thirty years. Unlike the hospitalized schizophrenics who developed tardive dyskinesia, the ad executives taking SSRIs have good lawyers.

Glenmullen's book is not the sort of bend-over-backward balanced assessment that Luhrmann's is. (One of the blurb writers compares it to "The Jungle.") Yet one is inclined to listen to him, because he is not a one-solution man. Indeed, he prescribes SSRIs. Like many cautious psychiatrists, he uses them to relieve depression to the point where the patient can do something about its source. He tells patients that medication is just a crutch, that they need psychotherapy, that if they don't find out what's causing the depression it will never go away. (He cites the research showing that although drugs and psychotherapy are about equally effective against depression in the short term, people who rely on drugs alone are far more likely to relapse. Incidentally, the same is true for anxiety disorders.) He seems to have an unclouded faith in short-term psychotherapy. In the cases he recounts, the patients soon cough up the underlying reason for their troubles, and talk about it, and get better, usually in less than a year. But these people may not be atypical; mild to moderate depression is one area where short-term psychotherapies have had remarkably good results. Apart from his insistence that SSRIs should not be dispensed without psychotherapy, Glenmullen believes that they should be given to far fewer patients. Doctors are now prescribing them for weight problems, premature ejaculation, back pain, PMS, failed romances, nail biting. Increasingly, SSRIs are also being given to children, whereas, to quote a 1996 review article in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, "The evidence is unanimous that antidepressants are no more effective than placebos in children with symptoms of depression." In Glenmullen's view, seventy-five per cent of people on SSRIs can either go off the drug or dramatically reduce their dose. In any case, they should read this book.

For many people of my generation, especially women, psychotherapy is not so much an issue as a history, a language in which they learned to speak of themselves, and of life. This fact has been widely deplored. Psychotherapy, people say, has taught women to think of themselves as victims. It has made them narcissistic, turned them in on their own minds rather than out into the world, where the men seem to be living. True enough, of some therapies. In others, women—and men—have learned to *stop* being victims, and to act in the world. That was the case with Emily Fox Gordon, the author of "Mockingbird Years: A Life In and Out of Therapy" (Basic; $24). The title is a little scary; this is not just another "woman's memoir" but a memoir of the couch, the tears. Yet "Mockingbird Years" is a beautiful book, and very tough-minded.

Gordon was born in the late forties to a father who was an economist—he became the Director of the Budget in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations—and a mother who, in Gordon's view, was even more gifted: artistic, imaginative, subtle. She was also, Gordon felt, embarrassed by her chubby, emotional, underachieving daughter. By the age of eleven, Gordon had begun her voyage through psychotherapy, a long story (six therapists) that is a sort of capsule history of psychodynamic treatment in the postwar period. First she was sent to orthodox psychoanalysts who, faithful to the Freudian rule, put her on the couch and remained silent for most of the hour, as did Gordon. (Fifty minutes of silence. For a pre-adolescent. The parents paid for this.) Then she began a sit-up therapy, which, however, came to an abrupt end when Gordon was dumped by a boyfriend and responded, as she unsentimentally recounts, by scratching at her wrists with a pair of nail scissors. That was it—she was judged suicidal, and sent to Austen Riggs, a famous institution in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, where, diagnosed as having "schizoid personality disorder with borderline trends," she spent three years. She is very funny on the subject of Riggs. Now and then, she says, something interesting would happen. Once, for example, a man inserted a number of hard-boiled eggs into his rectum and then laid them, publicly, in the hall. But mostly the place was just boring: elderly outpatients "shuffled up and down Main Street, stopping for the lunch special at the drug store, ducking into the library for a nap."

At Riggs, however, Gordon was eventually assigned to a man who became the lodestar of her youth, the existential therapist Leslie Farber. Existential therapy, almost forgotten today—it was *echt* sixties—focussed on patients' responsibility for their lives, and on the "authenticity" of the patient-therapist relationship. Farber, Gordon says, treated her like a moral agent—a revelation to her. He also, in keeping with the non-Freudian rules of "authenticity," kept loose boundaries. He told her about his childhood, his marriages. He offered not a cure but a friendship, and when, after a few years, he left Riggs and moved to New York, she went with him, and got gummed up in his life, hanging out in his kitchen, becoming friends with his wife, looking after his children. Like many of the experimental treatments of the sixties, this ended badly. Though Farber had permitted her intrusions, he finally lost patience with them and bawled her out. In considerable disrepair, she left him soon afterward. She married and went back to school. Eventually she returned to therapy—with "Dr. B.," whom she describes as an "ordinary" man, not like the deep-browed Farber—and stayed for seven years. Dr. B. had no truck with existentialism. This was the eighties, and the rule of therapy was empathy. Dr. B. wound her in love and compassion; she, resisting him all the way, unwound herself, and emerged as a writer.

Gordon has a low opinion of psychotherapy. She says what the others say: victimization, narcissism. Therapy, she writes, taught her to view herself as "saucer-eyed and frail," as opposed to the "blunt and caustic person" she knew she was. It corrupted her morally: "I wasn't interested in being happier, but in growing more poignantly, becomingly, meaningfully unhappy."

She says all this, yet she is a walking refutation of it—above all, of the moral indictment. Good writing is itself a moral virtue. Wit, complexity, and detail are its outward signs, and "Mockingbird Years" shines with them. One could search the whole of confessional literature and be hard put to find a less self-serving portrait of a writer's childhood than the one Gordon gives us. Her father, she says, was a "disastrous parent," and, she immediately adds, "worse than he deserved to be." Mostly, it seems, he was just busy with his work, and emotionally blind, as men were supposed to be in those days. As for the artistic mother, this is a deeper matter. The mother is the book's great character. Gordon writes:

> When she bathed my brother and me, she floated birthday candles anchored in halved walnut shells in the bathtub. She turned off the lights, lit the candles, and stood smoking a cigarette in a shadowy corner of the bathroom as we sat in the midst of a small shining armada.

Even as the shadows engulf her, the mother is always haloed in light. On a vacation in Puerto Rico, the family goes for a boat ride:

> The water was full of tiny phosphorescent creatures; a hand or foot dipped into it came out glowing and glittering. My mother found this fascinating; again and again, as my father sat at the rudder, she lowered her hand into the water, held it up loosely in front of her eyes, and gazed at it. . . . She would often do something similar at the dinner table in Washington, holding up her graceful, aging hand so that it was framed by the nimbus of the candle flame, turning it this way and that and marvelling as if it had been transformed into the head of a swan.

By then Gordon recognized the gesture as a sign not just of her mother's poetic nature but of the fact that she was an alcoholic. The portrait is almost Southern.

In 1961, Gordon recalls, her family went to a reception at the White House. She wore "a black-and-white checked shirtwaist with oversized pink rosette buttons" which her mother had ordered from the "chubbette" section of the Sears catalogue. When, in the receiving line, she got to L.B.J., he leaned down from his great height, "took my hands in his large ones," and said, "How do you do, my little cotton-tailed bunny rabbit?" This is funny—the big, kind, corny Texan romancing the fat little girl—but

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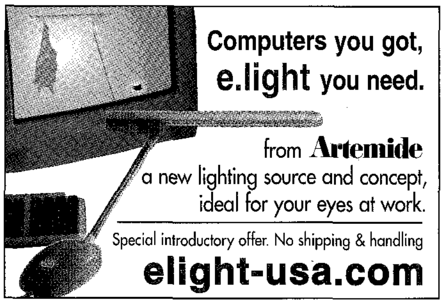
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it is also stabbing, for that is what she needed: to be someone's bunny rabbit. (Alas, it's what we all need.) She didn't get it; instead she got therapy, whose attempts to compensate she now regards as false and demoralizing. But if therapy gave her the strength to write that scene plainly, factually, with no tears—or just ours—then it taught her something. Gordon is not a great thinker on psychotherapy. She's still hung up on Farber (the one who was mean to her, natch), and her condescension to Dr. B., the one who cleaned up after Farber, the one whose love and pity she pushed away—thereby, I believe, conquering self-love, self-pity—is painful to witness. But she is a thrilling writer. Dr. B. should be proud. Good for you, Dr. B.! The heck with Farber!

What do we think about psychotherapy? I don't mean for inpatients. (They clearly need it; their lives are wrecked.) I mean for outpatients, the walking wounded—us. For some it's damaging. Even when it's good, it's very expensive, but compared with the church and family of yesteryear, whose loss it is trying to make up for, it's a bargain. (In the church you tithed, gave ten per cent of your income. As for the family, it kept women at home. What was the cost of that?) And when it is good, it is something hard to find in life, a moral dialogue. Gordon says Farber taught her that talk could be "treated not as a means to a therapeutic end, but as the central source of moral meaning itself." That's very existential of her, but the truth is that a talk about moral meaning cannot *not* be therapeutic, if by therapy we mean not just symptom relief but a chance for a serious life. The matters that people discuss in psychotherapy—whether they are really answerable for their lives, whether they should place their own welfare over another's—are the things that people in the Bible were trying to decide. They are the big questions, right? For patients in serious distress, pills are useful, but they cannot provide, don't aim to provide, what psychodynamic therapy has at its core. Luhrmann summarizes it: "a sense of human complexity, of depth, an exigent demand to struggle against one's own refusals, and a respect for the difficulty of human life." ♦

SHOWCASE

HOG HEAVEN

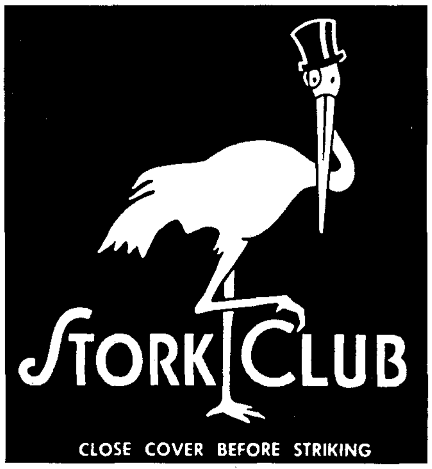
At the Stork Club, at about 3 P.M. every Easter Sunday—by which time, I guess, the suave proprietor-potentate Sherman Billingsley figured that Christ had risen—the band would stop, a net above the dance floor would open, and gold balloons would float down toward eager, uplifted faces. If America's postwar banquet years needed an iconic image of feast, this was it. Each balloon contained a prize: a bottle of Sortilege, a year's supply of Cigogne soap, a hundred-dollar bill, a trip for two to Bermuda—all totems of the Stork Club's special, almost giddy atmosphere of privilege and abundance. The American powerhouse was always on display there, but amid the Easter shower of balloons it would momentarily lose its aplomb and turn into a scrum—shoving, stamping, grabbing, laughing, as its members battled for prizes. I remember seeing Dorothy Kilgallen jostling up against Walter Winchell and Roy Cohn and Ethel Merman, and even my father, Bert Lahr. That emblematic moment is captured both in an exhibition of photographs of the Club currently at the New-York Historical Society and in a new book, "Stork Club: America's Most Famous Nightspot and the Lost World of Café Society," by Ralph Blumenthal.

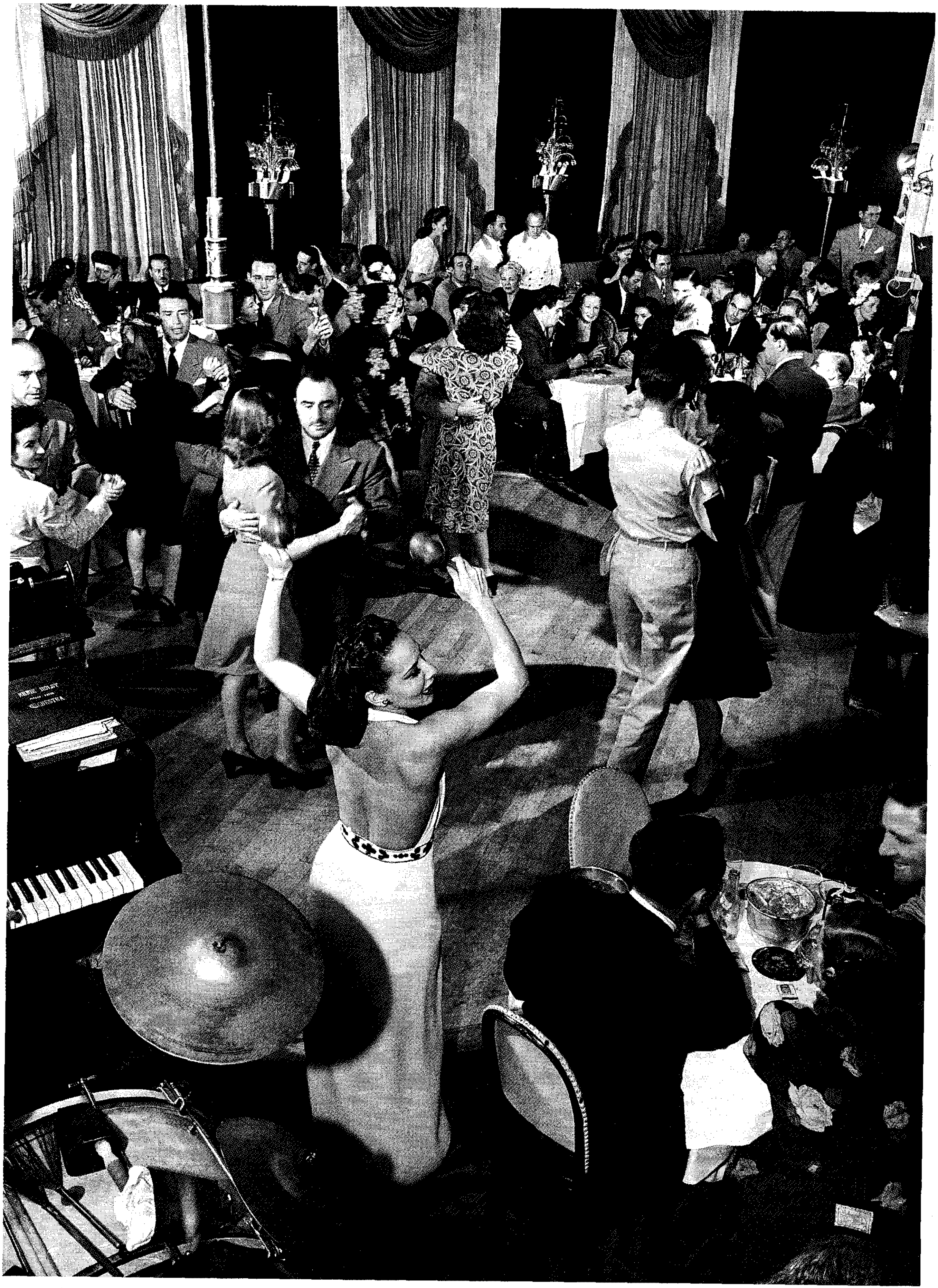
Billingsley, who started out as a dirt-poor Oklahoman with an eye for the main chance, had done time in Leavenworth for bootlegging during Prohibition; the Stork Club, which began as a humble speakeasy, with underworld backing, grew into his dream of class. Celebrities were the sugar that Billingsley used to swat the fly, and he insured the loyalty of his famous clients by often allowing them to eat free. Behind a 14k.-gold cordon on Fifty-third Street, a hundred feet east of Fifth Avenue, he built himself and the stars he cultivated into an aristocracy of success, whose reported activities made a myth of Manhattan as playground.

Billingsley controlled the place like a tyrant. He could listen in on the phones, which waiters ceremonially carried to banquettes, and a two-way mirror gave the adamantly non-union Billingsley a more efficient way of keeping an eye on the help. He also had more hand signals than a third-base coach; his various semaphores indicated to the waiters if a patron should be elevated to the Cub Room or banished to the recesses of the main dining room, if he should be kicked out or allowed to eat free, as well as what gift each should receive—Scotch, orchids, suspenders, a tie, sometimes even a terrier or a poodle he'd bred on his farm, or, at Easter, a white rabbit.

The Stork Club's world was perennially gala, but its buoyancy hid a brutishness. The flames of the fifties Red scare were fanned at its tables, where J. Edgar Hoover, Cardinal Spellman, Roy Cohn, and Joe McCarthy rubbed elbows; and it was forever tarnished by an incident involving the celebrated black entertainer Josephine Baker, who claimed that she'd been refused service. "Famous nite spot just a white spot," read the picket signs. "The Stork discriminates against everybody," Winchell argued, in a sweet piece of café-society reasoning. "It's a snob joint."

—*John Lahr*

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Decita (in backless dress) and the Ernie Holst Orchestra, at the Stork Club, November, 1944. Photograph by Alfred Eisenstaedt.

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BRIEFLY NOTED

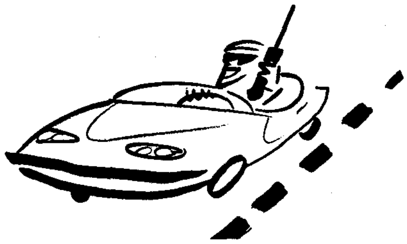
Blue Angel, *by Francine Prose (Harper-Collins; $25).* In this ironic gloss on Von Sternberg's tragedy of erotic abasement, Angela Argo, a rail-thin, excessively pierced, mopey college student, is the unlikely siren calling her creative-writing professor to his doom. Prose's retelling focusses less on the ridiculous and self-destructive behavior of the professor—a schlemiel named Ted Swenson—than on the far more laughable (and hazardous) rigidity of the politically correct behavior codes governing his tiny Vermont campus. In such a blinkered environment, the hapless protagonist muses, "Anna Karenina" and "Madame Bovary" are no longer classics of "inappropriate, tragic, ennobling, life-changing love" but merely books about adultery.

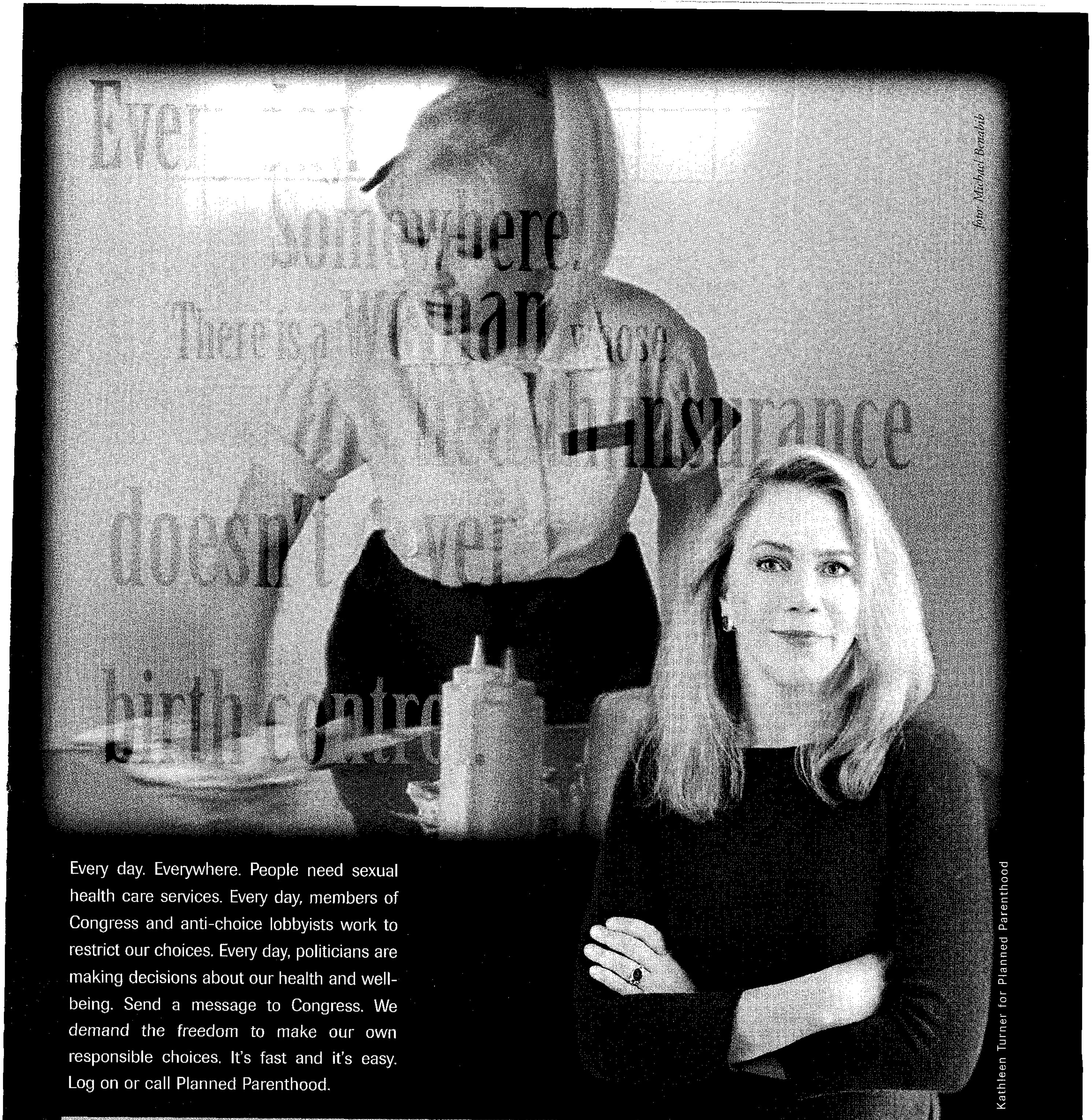
Dreambirds, *by Rob Nixon (Picador USA; $23).* In the late eighteen-hundreds, European fashion created such a high demand for ostrich feathers that entrepreneurial breeders in the deserts of South Africa and Arizona were able to amass fortunes almost overnight—only to lose them just as quickly when the market crashed at the onset of the First World War. Nixon grew up in South Africa, and his tale, like the feather palaces constructed by flush ostrich barons, is a "promiscuous fantasmagoria" of history, ornithology, and episodes from his own coming of age under apartheid. Ultimately, the book does what the awkward bird Nixon clearly loves cannot: it soars.

The Battle for God, *by Karen Armstrong (Knopf; $27.50).* This is a learned and illuminating study of fundamentalism among Jews (in Israel), Christians (American Protestants), and Muslims (Sunni Egyptians and Shiite Iranians). Armstrong argues that all strains of fundamentalism, despite their differences, are fearful defenses against modernity. Although fundamentalists believe that they have gone back to the roots of their respective faiths, in reality fundamentalism is a modern invention that misconstrues the purpose of science and confuses myth and fact. The author is sympathetic to the human need for spiritual meaning, but she points out that the intellectual flaws of fundamentalist beliefs are customarily accompanied by paranoia, anger, and aggression—which, in turn, frequently betray the message of the faith.

Get Happy, *by Gerald Clarke (Random House; $29.95).* So high were the highs and so low the lows of Judy Garland's forty-seven years that, a few months before she died, in 1969, she said to a friend that her real age was four hundred and twelve. A notorious exaggerator, Garland seems right on the money in this instance. She began her career as a toddler in vaudeville, went on to movies, radio, TV, and concert tours, and experienced more than the average number of reversals, love affairs, and suicide attempts. And yet this biography, which doesn't stint on event, is mystifyingly colorless and dry. Joseph Mankiewicz, one of Garland's lovers in the forties, told Clarke, "I don't think anybody's going to close the book on Judy Garland." But the author, who displays little appreciation of either his subject's talent or her witty, complicated personality, has barely even opened it.

A Trip to the Stars, *by Nicholas Christopher (Dial; $24.95).* This labyrinthine novel of feuding moguls and illegitimate children is animated by an encompassing lust for beauty. In 1965, an orphan boy, Enzo, is kidnapped from his new adoptive aunt, Alma, in Manhattan and brought to his great-uncle Junius's hotel outside Las Vegas. Junius, a collector and philanthropist, introduces him to an eccentric cast of relatives and friends who gradually reveal to Enzo the mystery of his birth. The boy's story is like a revenge drama seen through an opium haze, and it's easy to become disoriented. But Christopher also offers us an alluringly baroque vision of hedonism—the American dream run wild.

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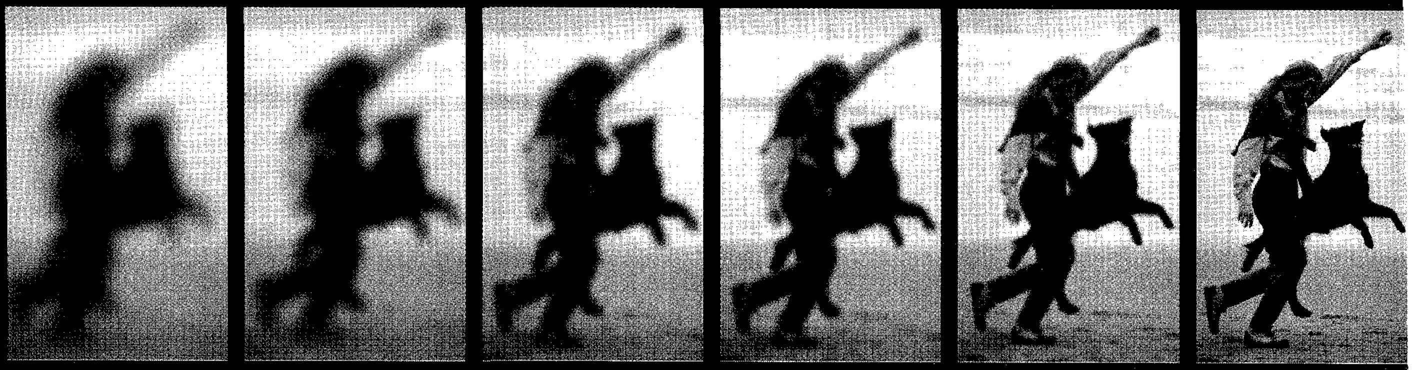

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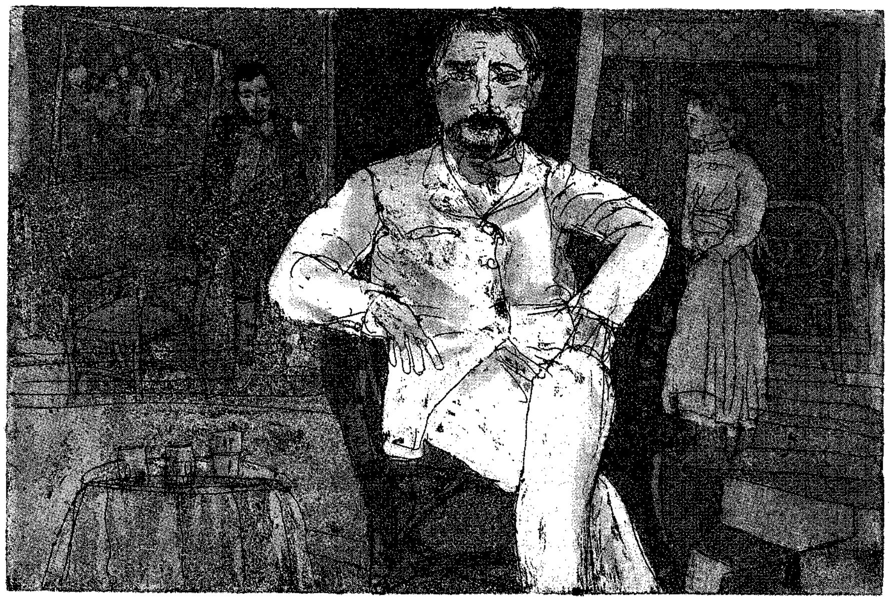
THE THEATRE

DISPLACED PERSONS

The lost souls of Russia and Ireland.

BY JOHN LAHR



Revived by Michael Mayer, with Derek Jacobi in the title role, Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya" sounds one of the twentieth century's first notes of exhaustion.

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

The ability to turn ideas into behavior was Anton Chekhov's great gift to twentieth-century theatre. His "Uncle Vanya" (1897), which is revived at the Brooks Atkinson, is a kind of existential symphony that uses every texture of stage language—silence, space, speech, subtext—to create a unique and profound music of comedy and collapse.

Even before the lights come up on Michael Mayer's thrilling production, Astrov (the marvellous Roger Rees) lounges alone on the stage, amid the eternal drone of summer sounds. He paces, ponders, sprawls in wicker chairs on the peeling porch of Tony Walton's decaying country house. Astrov and the audience are waiting for life to begin, and this weight of time passing is the main, coruscating theme of Chekhov's play. A doctor worn out both by work and by the unmoored civilization he has inherited, Astrov sounds one of the twentieth century's first notes of exhaustion. "I'm burned out. . . . Work, work, work, from morning to night," he says to the nanny (the poignant Anne Pitoniak). "Don't need anything. Can't love anyone." Astrov's avocation is planting trees, but, like the landscape he charts and husbands, he, along with all the other people who inhabit Chekhov's world, is part of "a picture of slow but relentless decline."

In Mike Poulton's superb translation, which is at once crisp, witty, and actable, the vastness of the characters' loss and the folly of their capacity for denial come sensationally into focus. Each character has an obsession that is both a salvation and an evasion: Astrov has his doctoring; Vanya (Derek Jacobi) the estate; Vanya's plain and pious niece, Sonya (Amy Ryan), her unrequited love for Astrov; his disputatious mother (Rita Gam) her philosophical reading; the tyrannical retired professor of art, Serebryakov (the splendid Brian Murray), his critical works; and his beautiful young wife, Yelena (the compelling Laura Linney), a dutifulness that hides her lack of direction. The comedy and the tragedy of the events is that the characters see their predicaments, yet can do nothing to change them. This sense of stalemate is perhaps best incarnated in Vanya, whose life has been ded-

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icated to running the estate in order to support Serebryakov's arid output—a waste about which Vanya is in no doubt. "I might shine, but I give no light," Vanya says. He goes on, "I can't sleep at night for the rage and hopelessness that wells up inside me—the stupidity of chucking away everything I could have had!"

Despite Jacobi's otherwise expert attack, there is too much sheen on him, as if his vitality hadn't quite been sapped by a generation of rural drudgery. In the farce of Act III, however, his despair and ennui become inspired fury, when Serebryakov proposes that the estate be sold to underwrite his life in the city. Here, just before he tries to shoot the pompous old baby, Jacobi goes into a tailspin of sidesplitting mockery. "Art is your discipline?—Well let's talk about Art!—a subject on which you demonstrate, in every line you've ever written, the most pitiful, laughable, profound ignorance," he says, scintillating in his white heat. "My life's in ruins. I *have* no life! . . . So thanks very much, please accept my undying hatred!"

At the end of the play, Chekhov's rusticated characters, like Beckett's tramps, can't go on and must go on. "We have to live our lives—that's all," Sonya says, giving a filigree of faith to their life sentence of resignation. As she dreams out loud of angels and redemption, Vanya sits crying beside her. His tears are not for faith but for the absence of it. In this heartbreaking stage picture, Chekhov perfectly captures the ambiguous equipoise of disillusion and hope which constitutes daily life. "Oh, this world of darkness," the nanny says, in the play's penultimate moment. "God forgive us. Forgive us all." Of the many achievements of this gorgeous production, perhaps the most memorable is not what's in the words but what's underneath them: the abiding grace of Chekhov's humanity.

For Americans who watch Sebastian Barry's poetic "Our Lady of Sligo" (at the Irish Repertory Theatre), much of the historical predicament of Barry's heroine, Mai O'Hara, a member of the Catholic bourgeoisie, which felt that it was robbed of its inheritance by the Sinn Fein revolution, is of almost no account. The dynamics of drama, not of Irish politics, are what hold our attention, or don't.

Mai is a distressed alcoholic, who languishes with her memories and her monologues on a hospital deathbed in 1953. She is a roiling compendium of regret, an incarnation of personal and class disappointment—over her hate-filled, abusive marriage, her dead son, her lost prestige and promise. She is played by the dexterous Sinéad Cusack, whose voice orchestrates every word with great nuance and authority, but whose solid core is at odds with the ravaged, splintered personality of her character. It's only through the force of Max Stafford-Clark's production and of Barry's persuasive rhetoric that she assumes the hoary mantle of the forgotten Irish middle class to which she bears witness. "I need rescue," Mai says, and in her mouth speech becomes a kind of imperial assertion; she is, literally and figuratively, talking for history.

But articulation can be its own stumbling block. Mai is locked into an inner dialogue, and the characters in her story have no purchase on her waking life. "I was never married," she says as her husband and daughter stand at her bedside, in the play's first beats. She cannot see them; they cannot penetrate her. The stakes are thus lowered, and, inevitably, the weight of the drama falls on language rather than on behavior. Barry can make wonderful music with words, but no one can accuse him of being a minimalist. A head is not bald, it's a "continent of skin, an Australia of it"; Mai isn't startled awake but "pierced up out of . . . slumbers like a gannet surfacing through the salty power of the river tide." Every character that maneuvers around Mai's bed is there to discourse about rather than to dramatize her life. From her upwardly mobile husband, Jack (Jarlath Conroy), we hear of their privileged life in Africa; from her daughter, Joanie (Melinda Page Hamilton), we learn of the family fights; from her father (Tom Lacy), we hear how in the garden Mai would name the color of the violets: "Blue, blue, blue. . . ."

Barry is probably Ireland's finest living dramatist; his problem here is that his eloquence robs the barbarous moments of their danger. Hate and disgust and despair are rendered elegant. Barry writes beautifully, all right, but, unlike Chekhov, he insists too strenuously on himself as a poet, rather than letting the poetry of stage characterization speak for him. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK

Gladiators galore in Ridley Scott's Rome.

BY ANTHONY LANE

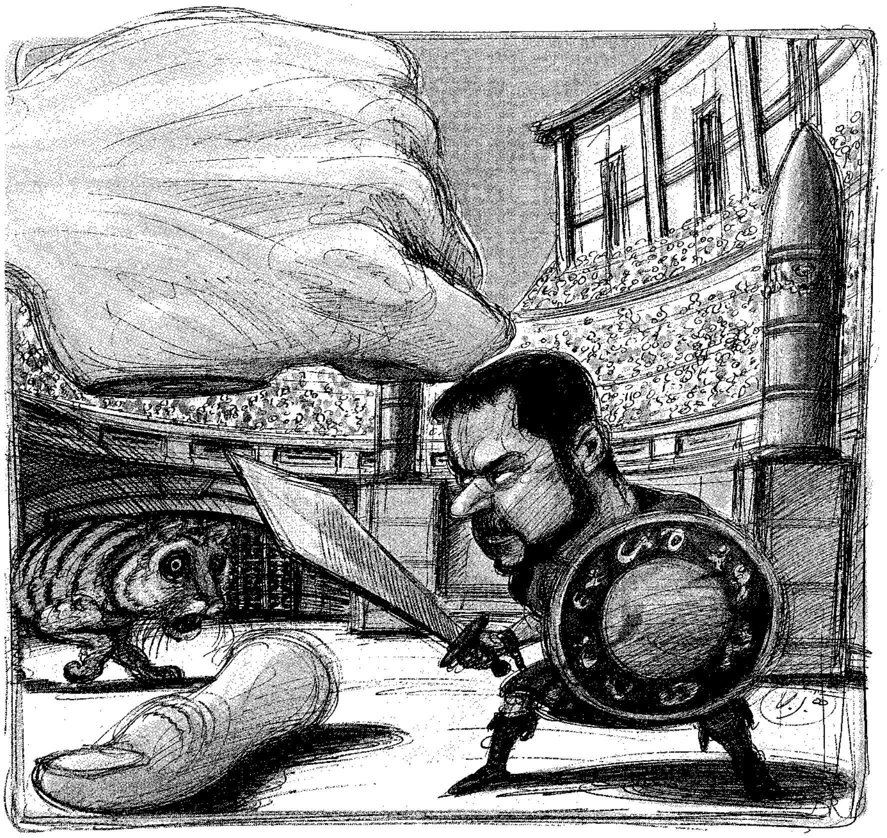
The new Ridley Scott picture "Gladiator" begins in triumphant gloom. The date is 180 A.D., and the Roman general Maximus (Russell Crowe) is stuck in the mud and mists of Germania, on the northern flank of the Empire; his legions, fanatically faithful to their leader, are ranged against a tribe of Germans so aggressively hairy that even a soldier as war-wise as Maximus is uncertain whether to harass them with cavalry from the rear or simply shave them to death. Maximus is followed into battle by his fearsome dog. "At my signal, unleash hell," he says. Is that a battle cry, or is it time for a walk? At any rate, we are plunged into a melee of sprayed blood and breath that steams in the air; great tubs of fire are catapulted toward the enemy, and flaming arrows fly like shooting stars. Victory nears amid descending snow.

We have been here before. The date was 1964 A.D., and the movie director Anthony Mann was sticking to his guns, or his javelins, in "The Fall of the Roman Empire." The most memorable scene in that overarching, undervalued movie is also set on a northerly plain, with lighted torches flaring in swirls of snow. I guess that Ridley Scott and his writers—David Franzoni, John Logan, and William Nicholson—are trusting the short memory of the moviegoing public, but I was touched to see them returning to the embrace of so wondrous an image. It seems to gather in all the fearful ambitions of an imperium; are we meant to imagine civilization blazing a trail through barbarous wastes, or the scorched-earth policies of unchecked power? Maximus himself is poised between the two: a good man meting out brutality. Crowe is stocky, sad, and stubbled, with a low Neanderthal brow and quick eyes, educated in suspicion; though shorter than most of the men around him, he has mastered the art of walking taller than any of them. Once or twice he tries a smile, and it practically cracks the lens.

The story is your basic three-act affair, the kind of thing that screenplay workshops teach as holy writ. After his German victory, Maximus is asked by the aging emperor Marcus Aurelius—played by a loose-haired Richard Harris, who is about as Roman as a pint of Guinness—to be his successor. Maximus goes away to stroke his chin and think about it, but before he can offer a response Marcus is smothered to death by his own son, Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix), who promptly declares that he, not some sweaty soldier, will be taking charge. Viewers new to the period may ask themselves how so sane and pensive a parent—Marcus wrote the "Meditations," after all, a touchstone of the Stoic temperament—could have sired so rich a fruitcake. Digging around, I found a fourth-century historian who claimed that Commodus' mother fell for a gladiator and confessed her lust to Marcus; he, in turn, ordered not only that the gladiator should die but that his wife "should wash herself from beneath in his blood and in this state lie with her husband." That would explain a lot. Amazingly, it doesn't get into the film.

Maximus escapes death, goes home, finds his family slain, faints, wakes up on a slave train, and ends up being sold to Oliver Reed. What a life. Reed, who plays an ex-gladiator named Proximo, died during the making of the film—of drink, needless to say, the blood having long since passed from his alcohol-stream. Having cowered at his Bill Sykes in "Oliver!," I thought he was a terrifying actor who never got his due; with his bullock's bulk and that soft, whispering sea roar of a voice, he could have trod the Burt Lancaster path. This last role is not quite meaty enough for a sendoff, but I liked the sight of his blue eyes, glazed with the tedium of daily massacre, opening a little wider as he first watches Maximus in the ring—gold dust glinting in the sand.

All plots lead to Rome, and Maximus, presumed dead, arrives incognito at the gates of the Colosseum, accompanied by his new best friend and fellow-slave Juba (Djimon Hounsou), plus a barrel load of computer-graphic imagery. "Gladiator" takes C.G.I. about as far as it will cur-



Maximus, the former general, fights for his life in the Colosseum.

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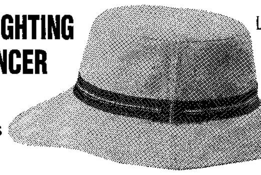

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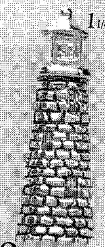

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rently go; much of the ancient city is a virtual re-creation, as is most of the throng that packs in to watch the games. It's hard to pin down, but your senses are never quite pricked with the sharpness of the real; you can see the air humming with bloodlust, but you can't smell it. Maybe that's a good thing, because if "Gladiator" were any more authentic the audience in the movie theatre might start spearing one another in the throat. You find yourself thrilling to acts of violence, but that, I guess, is the freakish strength of this picture: it shows you the tantalizing laws of cruelty, and it forces you to ask yourself just how speedily you, too, would slide from citizen to lout. At one point, Russell Crowe crosses his forearms in front of him, with a blade in each fist; then, with a swift, double-backhand jerk, he scissors a man's head off. My, how we cheered. If Jerry Springer ran the Super Bowl, this is how it would end up.

At the climax, Maximus even takes on Commodus himself; this may sound unlikely, but the young emperor was, indeed, a crazed amateur gladiator, who fought more than seven hundred times, once against an unarmed giraffe. So says Gibbon, at any rate, and if you want to prep yourself for this film skim through Volume I of "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire." Note, in particular, the famous claim: "If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus." In other words, Ridley Scott's movie—like Anthony Mann's, which had the same background, and most of the same characters—is positioned at the exact moment of paradise lost. "So much," says Marcus, with a weary pause, "for the glory of Rome." It's a wonderful line: is he dissing the fatherland or proudly recalling all the wars he has fought—"so much"—in the name of Pax Romana? The exhausted opening of the film already feels like an ending, and, with mad gaze and milk-white armor, Joaquin Phoenix, who has fleshed out alarmingly since his gawky teens, is just the kind of bad angel who can ruin your peace and call it entertainment. Romans rise ecstatically to their feet, not knowing that he has brought them to their knees.

High politics wind through "Gladiator" in a tangle of constitutional announcements. "There was a dream that was Rome," we are told, and the echo of Dr. King bounces awkwardly off the sight of Juba, a near-naked black man, scrapping for the pleasure of the crowd. "Give power back to the people," Marcus tells Maximus, but nothing that ensues does much honor to popular virtue, and when Maximus complains to Commodus' elegant sister Lucilla (Connie Nielsen) that he has "the power only to amuse a mob" she replies curtly, "That *is* power." Maximus does not want to fight, but only by fighting can he avenge his family and salve the wounded state of Rome; on the other hand, he does rather enjoy himself out there, wearing a spiffy helmet, engaging hungry tigers in hand-to-paw combat, and making the charioteers wish they had fitted the optional airbag.

"Gladiator," like its hero, is aroused by everything that it knows to be corrupt; why else would the musical score (by Hans Zimmer and Lisa Gerrard) march so doomily in the footsteps of Mars from Holst's "The Planets"? "I will give the people the greatest vision of their lives," Commodus says, and it is no accident that he sounds like a film director: D. W. Griffith, perhaps, or Leni Riefenstahl, one of those dangerous geniuses who remind you what menace a vision can bear. There are times when "Gladiator" appears to be not so much photographed as cast in iron: gray-blue skies, flesh as cold and colorless as the armor that protects it, and hardened profiles that you could stamp on a coin. I spent half the movie trying to work out what the computerized Rome reminded me of, and then I clicked; it was Albert Speer's designs for the great Berlin of the future. Scott's is hardly a Fascist film, but it is insanely watchable in ways that set you fretting; like his own "Blade Runner," it makes you desperate to know the worst—to see what extremes this poisoned world can stretch to. When one gladiator has another pinned on the ground like an insect, he asks the Emperor to decide the fallen man's fate by the raising or lowering of a thumb. The mob does its best to sway his choice, which leaves us with the disconcerting spectacle of multiple, raving, Latin-speaking Siskels and Eberts—forty thousand thumbs *way* down. So that's what mass slaughter was like: just another trip to the movies. ♦

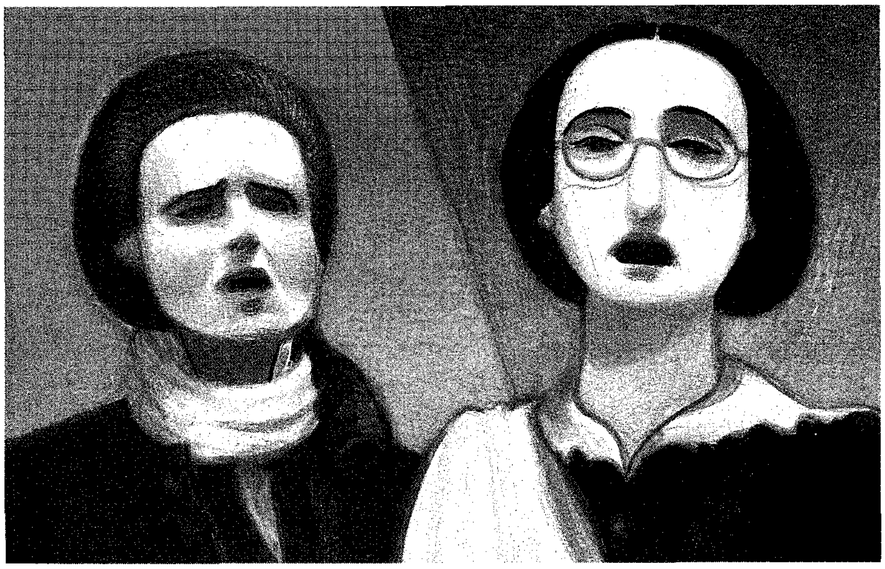
MUSICAL EVENTS

STAR TURNS

Lauren Flanigan and Lorraine Hunt Lieberson transform opera into drama.

BY ALEX ROSS

"The most massive sopranos are singing songs of scales," Wallace Stevens wrote. In the popular imagination, opera singers are less actors of roles than vessels for voices—the bigger the voice, the bigger the vessel. It would be silly to deny that the stereotype contains some truth. The possibly record-setting human tonnage in the Metropolitan Opera's current revival of "The Ring of the Nibelung" is a case in point. Singers at the Met are chosen on the basis of performances and tapes, not videos and eight-by-tens. The voices cast their spell, the ears are bewitched, and the eyes have the option of taking the night off.



Two of the world's finest singing actresses appeared at City Opera this season: Hunt Lieberson in "La Clemenza di Tito," and Flanigan in "The Mother of Us All."

LORENZO MATTOTTI

At New York City Opera, however, the large-lady stereotype doesn't apply. Here musical and theatrical values have achieved a parity that is rare in the operatic world. Under the artistic direction of Paul Kellogg, City Opera has found a distinctive profile not only by diversifying its repertory—less Verdi and Puccini, more Americana and Baroque—but also by cultivating singers who can act. Its spring season has been a small feast of opera-as-theatre. Lauren Flanigan and Lorraine Hunt Lieberson have lit up the State Theatre stage, appearing in Virgil Thomson's "The Mother of Us All" and Mozart's "La Clemenza di Tito," while Mark Morris's loony-tunes production of Rameau's opera-ballet "Platée" has drawn hip crowds to the square zones of Lincoln Center.

The installation of Flanigan, a forty-one-year-old American soprano, as the unofficial house diva of City Opera has set the tone for Kellogg's administration: her whirlwind activities are drawing comparisons with Beverly Sills's heyday at the company in the sixties and seventies. Although I wasn't around to see Sills at that time, I'd guess that Flanigan's work may find an even more significant place in New York operatic history. Everything she has done in the last few years has been captivating, and some of it has been staggering. Her tours de force are almost routine—which is a roundabout way of saying that a legendary career may be in the making.

Flanigan's Susan B. Anthony was a typically fastidious and formidable cre-

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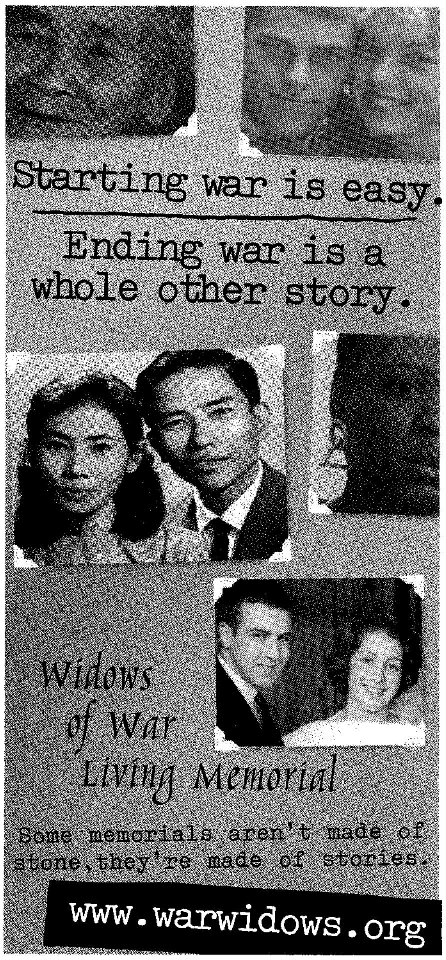
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ation. Tearing through mountains of papers and books at an enormous Victorian desk, she nailed down the character of the epoch-making suffragette even before the music began. Her air of nervous intelligence created a counterpoint to the urbane naïveté of Thomson's score and the abstract beauty of Gertrude Stein's libretto, which together summon such a crowd of associations that the main character is often in danger of getting lost. The purely visual potency of the performance came to the fore in the orchestral intermezzo of Act II, in which Susan B. works up the courage to give a major oration. Flanigan made no sound, yet the ferocity of her pacing back and forth won a round of applause. Her singing, at times piercingly strong and at times vulnerably beautiful, flowed out of the characterization. Delivering her great aria on the subject of fear—"Men have kind hearts when they are not afraid"—she brought forward a conflict that had been simmering from the start: Susan B. acts out of necessity, but also knows the consequences of her actions. The mixture of pride and sorrow in her voice suggested that women—and America at large—would gain freedom at the expense of innocence.

To have Lorraine Hunt Lieberson appearing in "Clemenza" at the same time meant that City Opera was presenting simultaneously two of the finest singing actresses in the world. Hunt, who is not as physically vibrant as Flanigan, builds a portrayal more in the grain of her voice than in the language of her body. Her specialty is to impose a stepwise intensification of phrasing on the repetitive structures of Baroque and classical arias. As she goes on, she seems to drop whatever outward façade her character has assumed in order to expose the emotional core of the part, the raw center. In the Act I aria "Parto, ma tu ben mio," in which Sesto declares his love for the scheming Vitellia by vowing to assassinate the Emperor and set fire to Rome, feelings of vengeance quickly overwhelm feelings of love, and violence flashes in the singer's voice. There was no need to check the translations—you already knew what she was saying.

For these two virtuoso turns, City Opera furnished productions that served as sturdy platforms. Stephen Wadsworth, the director of "Clemenza," may not have replicated the sensation that he achieved at City Opera a few years back with Handel's "Xerxes": his decision to dress the cast in elegant eighteenth-century costumes contradicted the Roman mayhem of the story, and Kurt Streit, despite his crisp, well-projected tenor tone, never found a vivid dramatic profile for the Emperor Titus. Still, Wadsworth filled the stage with meaningful exchanges, and Harry Bicket, in the pit, kept things moving at a lively pace. The staging of "The Mother of Us All," by Christopher Alden, was an aptly off-kilter pageant of nineteenth-century Americana—one in which women danced together and boys kissed. The dark-clad heroine moved like a ghost across Allen Moyer's austere sets and among Gabriel Berry's festive costumes. George Manahan, the conductor, gave the piece a breezy, outdoor air, as if he were leading on a bandstand.

As for "Platée," Rameau's satire of a Versailles-like assembly of gods and hangers-on, it did not lack for vital singing. Jean-Paul Fouchécourt struck a note of poignant absurdity as the reptilian hero of the piece, who is installed in a joke marriage with Jupiter. Amy Burton sang La Folie, a stand-in for the composer, with steely grace, and Christine Brandes, whose lovely soprano is familiar from many Baroque recordings, showed fresh power as Clarine. Matthew Chellis, in the role of Mercury, confirmed the good impression he made as a lyrically keening John Adams in "The Mother of Us All." Daniel Beckwith drew lean, characterful playing from the orchestra. But the director and his dancers were the stars, with the music relegated to the background.

Morris's images certainly stuck in the brain. The self-conscious Prologue, in which Thespis and other theatrical archetypes prepare to present the eve-

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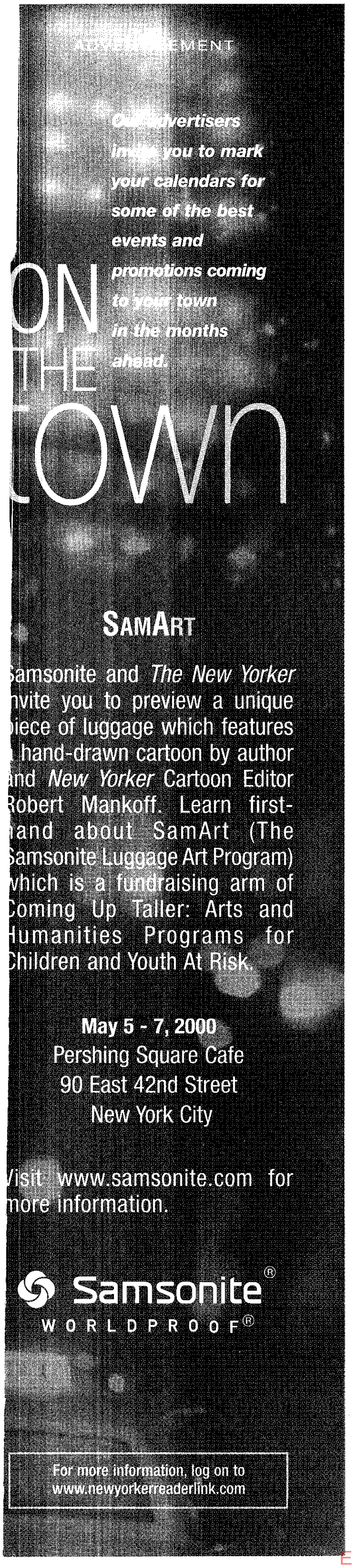

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ning's entertainment by guzzling wine, was transposed to a modern-day dive bar, replete with lowlifes. A Roman ode to Bacchus became a sort of surreal Baroque beer commercial. The problem, here and throughout, was that the opera itself became the butt of the joke: how delightfully absurd it was that stylish Baroque music kept playing while characters grabbed each other's body parts and assumed preposterous postures. The choreography pounded relentlessly on the downbeats—*one* two three, *one* two three—and the score took on a childish, singsong character. Even during Rameau's lyric interludes, some bit of business had to be going on: La Folie's lustrously melancholy aria "Aimables jeux" served as background music for a bout of turtle sex. Isaac Mizrahi's animal costumes wavered between the grotesque and the cutesy. As a friend suggested, it seemed as if Barney the dinosaur were waiting in the wings.

One of the most commanding performances at the Met this past season was Susan Graham's portrayal of Octavian in "Der Rosenkavalier." No one has ever denied the beauty of this singer's voice, but as Octavian she showed a dramatic boldness that I hadn't seen in her before. She followed that appearance with a program of French and American songs at Alice Tully Hall, giving a generous spotlight to Ned Rorem, whose music she has recorded on a new Erato disk. Rorem's songs, with their hawklike attention to poetic detail, demand a particular kind of emotional clarity that Graham was able—for the most part—to supply. The one thing missing was vulnerability: the voice was so secure, so serenely effortless, that it didn't communicate the sense of lost time and hidden pain that is threaded through a piece like "Early in the Morning." Lauren Flanigan happened to sing the same song the following night, in an inventive, intensely atmospheric recital at Joe's Pub, and the difference was clear. Graham wrapped the music in her magnificent voice and made a gift of it to the audience. Flanigan disappeared into the music, leaving a train of uncanny transformations. Those who limit themselves to grand opera at the Met are missing a singer at the summit of her art. ♦

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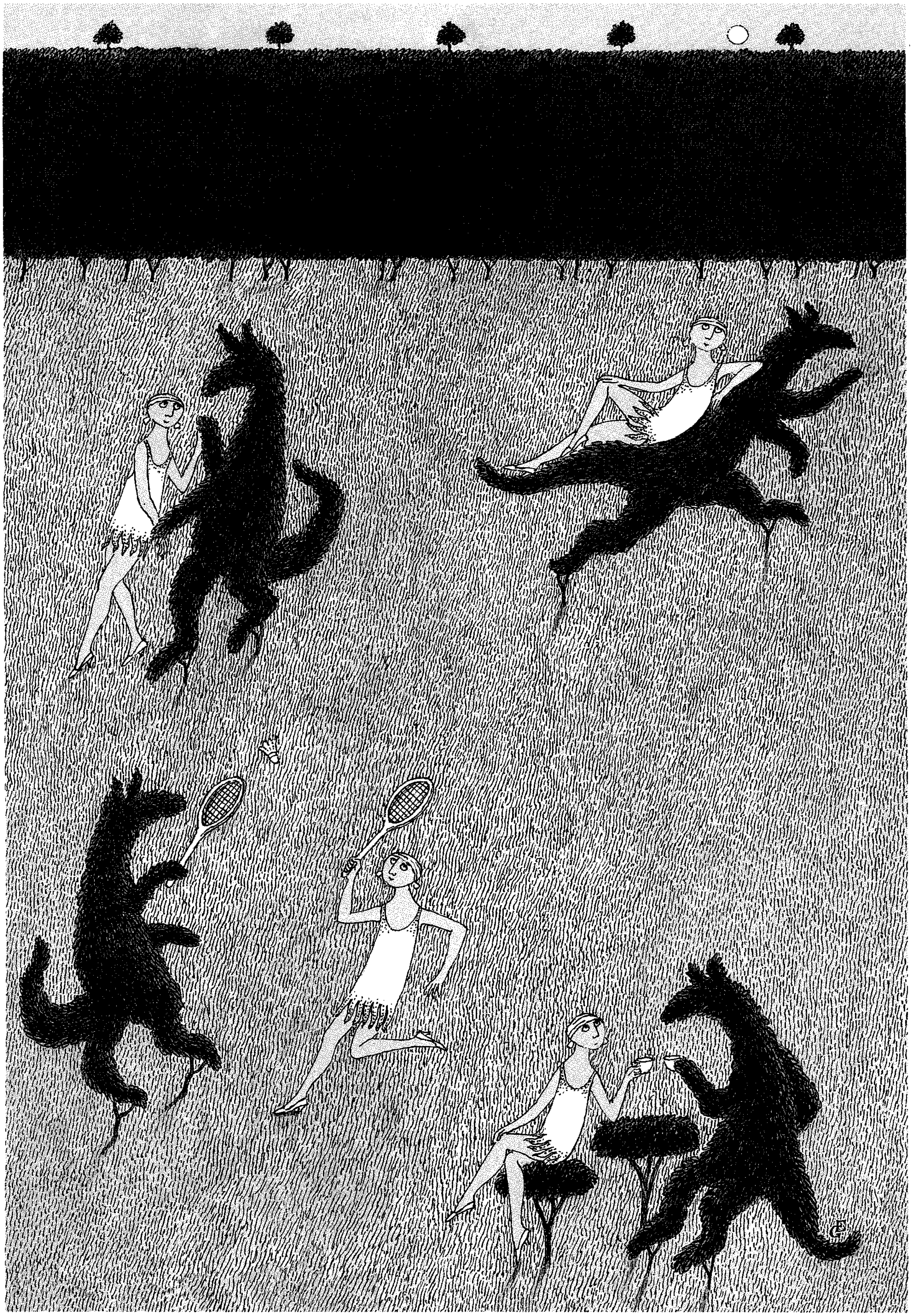

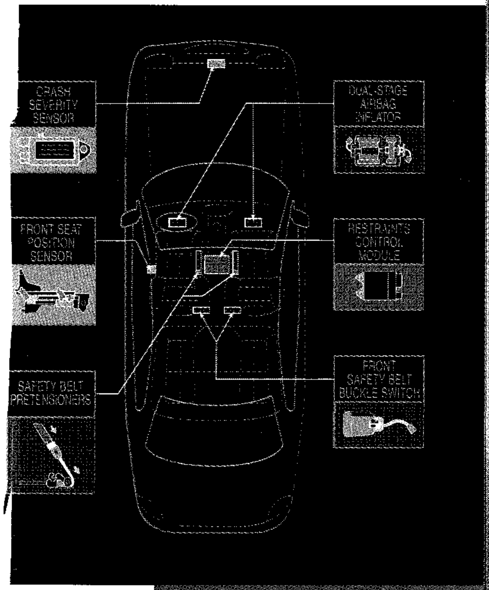
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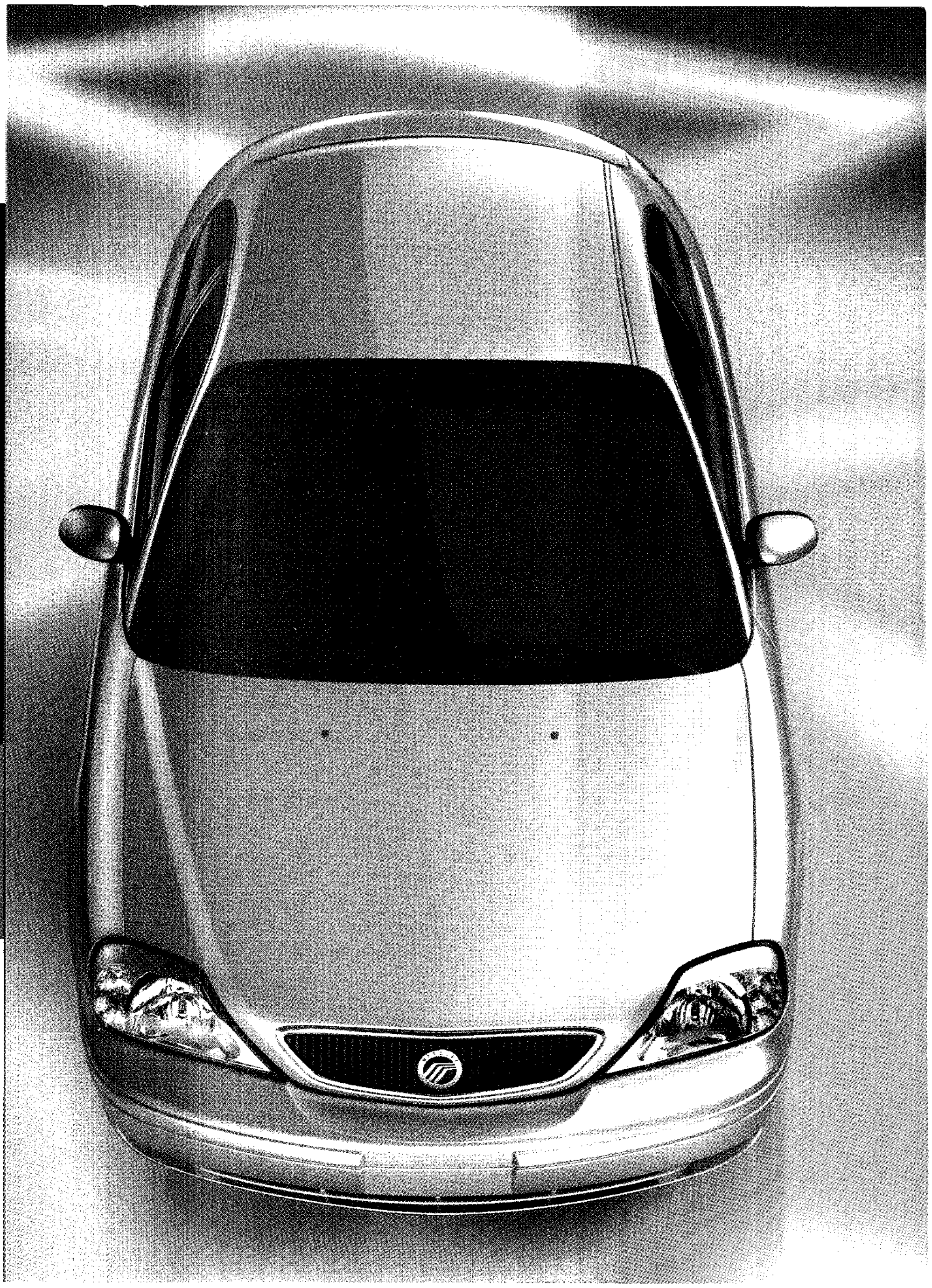

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